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*Johann Strauss*  
*Father and Son*

BOOKS BY

H. E. JACOB

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JACQUELINE AND THE JAPANESE  
BLOOD AND CELLULOID  
COFFEE, THE EPIC OF A COMMODITY





JOHANN STRAUSS THE YOUNGER  
1896

# Johann Strauss

*Father and Son*

A CENTURY OF LIGHT MUSIC

*by*

*H. E. Jacob*

*Translated by*

*Marguerite Wolff*

*The Greystone Press*

1940

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# *Introduction*

*by*

PITTS SANBORN

A whole family of famous musicians is by no means an unusual phenomenon. The Strauss family of Vienna, whose name is almost synonymous with the waltz, had earlier and later parallels. Take the Couperins of France. The oldest of them to achieve fame was already prominent in 1650 when he became organist of the Church of St. Gervais in Paris, a post held subsequently by member after member of that family. And the Couperins remained conspicuous in the musical life of France till the death of the last survivor, Céleste, in 1850.

In our own country we have the noteworthy case of the Damrosch family, founded by Dr. Leopold Damrosch, the most widely known of them being, of course, Walter Damrosch, famed both as conductor and composer. And pre-eminent among the prototypes (with conspicuous differences) of the Viennese Strausses must be named Johann Sebastian Bach and his four composer sons, and Leopold Mozart and his prodigy children, Nannerl and Wolfgang. Other musically fertile families have included the Gretrys, the Mendelssohns, the Schumanns, and, for that matter, the Puccinis. But no other musical line has captivated the imagination of the whole world quite as the Strausses of Vienna have done, their special destiny having been to set the whole world waltzing.

The Strauss dynasty, for such it became through the reign of the "Waltz King," Johann the Younger, held long sway in Vienna,

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the capital not only of the Habsburg empire, but of the earth-encompassing dominion of the new dance, and of the identification of the Strausses with the gayety, the color, the charm that characterized the "only Kaiserstadt" during the nineteenth century has been impressed upon the world by that most celebrated of all waltzes, "The Beautiful Blue Danube."

H. E. Jacob in this book skilfully relates the aesthetic history of the waltz dynasty to the social and even the political background of Austria and, indeed, in a measure to conditions in every country, from Russia to the United States, in which a Strauss appeared as conductor inculcating in person the authentic manner of playing the fascinating dances that already had given a unique quality to the court balls of the ruling house of Austria. Berlin, St. Petersburg, Paris, London, Boston and New York were favored in this tonal conquest of three-quarter time.

Mr. Jacob's book will impart some surprising information to those for whom the Strauss in the familiar bracketing "Strauss Waltz" is only a name. It tells in detail of the rise and membership of a musical kindred and of the length and nature of the influence exerted by them. And, inevitably, a valuable concomitant is the story of the waltz itself. The origin of the waltz is shrouded in the mists of the long ago, mists that the earnest efforts of musical archaeologists have failed to dispel. But certain it is that whatever the origin—perhaps merely an outgrowth of the rustic Ländler—Mozart and Beethoven both wrote waltzes, as did Weber and Schubert, and that Joseph Lanner and Johann Strauss the Elder, first of the waltz Strausses, had distinguished predecessors and contemporaries in their chosen field of composition. Lanner, three years Strauss' senior, and the aforesaid Johann, if they in no wise invented the waltz, did, through their fertility as composers and the immediate vogue of their dance orchestras, establish its invincible popularity.

## INTRODUCTION

Impressive is the tableau of Strauss achievement that Mr. Jacob sets before us. Johann the Elder had a comparatively short life. Born in 1804, he died in 1849. But by 1820, in his youthful but not lasting association with Lanner he was already winning the recognition of musical Vienna. It has been said of him that he lifted dance music to a higher level than it had ever attained before and adorned his melodies with the charm of brilliant instrumentation. To Johann the Elder are attributed more than 250 compositions, 152 of them waltzes. It was, however, the Younger (1825-1899) who earned the sobriquet of "Waltz King" though some have maintained that in sheer native talent he was inferior to his father.

Be that as it may, he was by no means inferior in fecundity, and his long life made it possible for him to put to his credit nearly 400 waltzes, as well as polkas and other dance pieces, and an array of justly famous operettas, the last of them composed when he was over seventy. It is unfortunate that so few of his waltzes are well known outside of Vienna, for those with which everybody is familiar, such as "The Beautiful Blue Danube," "Tales from the Vienna Woods," "Artists' Life," "Wine, Woman, and Song," are matched in excellence by many of the neglected waltzes. One of the very best of them happens to be among the treasures of that enchanting operetta "The Bat" (*Die Fledermaus*), a stage work that demonstrates Strauss' supremacy in another typically Viennese genre.

If the Johanns are the sustaining pillars of the Strauss dynasty, Mr. Jacob does not let us forget that two other sons of Johann the Elder worthily bore the name. There was Joseph (1827-1870) who, though frail of health, bequeathed to posterity no less than 283 compositions. Eduard, the youngest of the brotherhood—he was born in 1835—was also the longest-lived, surviving to carry on the dynastic name, if not quite the dominance, till 1916. His compositions are set at 200. And naturally, the worldly glitter and the

## INTRODUCTION

romance of a distinctly splendid period were freely woven into the lives of the dancing Strausses. Of all this Mr. Jacob takes engaging account. Yet through all the historical interludes and digressions, he keeps the reader steadily aware of what have been called "those irresistible waltzes that first catch the ear, and then curl round the heart, till on a sudden they invade and will have the legs."

Probably few today remember that Johann Strauss the Younger once visited the United States. He came in the year 1872 at the special request of the city of Boston, which was holding a gigantic Jubilee in the interests of world peace, and had invited also Bülow and Verdi. Johann the Younger, unlike his father and his brother Eduard, was by no means a good traveler. Indeed, Mr. Jacob tells us that a neurasthenic dread of a change of locality even resulted in such behavior as his seating himself on the floor of the railway carriage and drawing the curtains during the short trip from Vienna to the Semmering.

However, in this instance the persuasive powers of his wife Jetty and a fee of \$100,000, plus traveling expenses for himself, his wife, and two servants, prevailed. He made the journey, and on the westward crossing he, we are assured, was of all on board the only person not seasick. Mr. Jacob further tells us that though he arrived in New York in the best of spirits, he found little to enjoy in America. In Boston enormous placards had been set up at street corners showing him upright upon the globe, wielding a baton shaped like an imperial scepter. This struck him as a bit ridiculous. But it was nothing to his having to sacrifice the black-haired coat of his Newfoundland dog to satisfy the craze of American women for genuine curls as mementoes.

The auditorium in Boston was designed to accommodate 100,000, and six towering policemen were needed to pilot Strauss to the platform. On the musicians' tribune, Strauss himself relates, were gathered 20,000 singers. Before them was seated the great orchestra.

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As conductor-in-chief he had a hundred assistants to control these huge masses. Strauss points out in his report that even though they had had rehearsals, an artistic performance, in view of the numbers, was impossible. But if he declined to conduct he declares it would have cost him his life!

There he stood at the raised desk, high above all the others, facing an audience of 100,000 Americans! How, he asked himself, would the business start, how would it end? Suddenly a cannon shot rang out, a gentle hint to begin "The Blue Danube." Though Strauss declares this one appearance was enough for him and that he returned to Europe as quickly as he possibly could, the fact is that in Boston he conducted thirteen more concerts and two monster balls and that he also conducted in New York before sailing.

Interesting is Mr. Jacob's account of performances of the Strauss waltzes on the piano. Rubinstein employed his titanic methods. In powerful octaves he would allow the melody to boom out from the treble, while his left hand built up basses against it like blocks of stone, leaving the audience astounded that so much defiance should be hurled at a mere waltz. Annette Essipoff represented another school of Strauss interpreters, playing the waltzes as if they were Chopin nocturnes. The waltz "Voices of Spring" Strauss dedicated to the piano virtuoso Alfred Grünfeld. After Grünfeld played it through, Strauss said to him in astonishment, "Do you know, that waltz is not really so beautiful as it seems when you play it?" Grünfeld's method, we are told, was reminiscent of Mozart. He played Strauss waltzes very clearly, without using the pedal, and taking care that there was no rumbling in the bass. Mr. Jacob rounds out his annals of the Straussian reign with appropriate mention of such disciples as Lehár and Oscar Straus (no relation to the tribe of Johann) and even carries his supplementary remarks as far as a consideration of Tin Pan Alley and American Jazz.





*Book One*

*Johann the Elder*

*His Life and Work*

*There are two very difficult things  
in the world. One is to make a  
name for oneself and the other  
is to keep it. But let us give due  
praise to all the masters—from  
Beethoven to Strauss.*

ROBERT SCHUMANN



# 1

## The Birth of the Waltz

*As in politics, so in music, revolutionary changes penetrate into all homes, great and small. In music the new influence is perceptible even where its sensual ties with life are strongest, that is, in the dance.*

ROBERT SCHUMANN

### THE END OF THE MINUET

The French minuet in which the eighteenth century expressed itself more completely than in any other way, was not a mere dance, it was the composite work of art of the age. All the arts helped to build it up.

The music is Italian and a reminder of the triumphant march of the Renaissance. The man who danced the minuet left his sword in the cloak-room and was transformed into a courtier. No such transformation had taken place in the pre-minuet era when dance-music had conformed to the spirit of the battlefield and soldiers had danced between battles. The woman's part had been subservient, but with the advent of the minuet she obtained equal rights.

Gymnastics, the second art which had a part in the growth of the minuet, likewise came from Italy. The study of antique statuary during the Renaissance had taught men to recognize the

simple natural beauty of the body in movement, and this prepared the way for the French minuet. In the intermediary baroque period, the human leg had not been a leg at all but a booted balloon. The eighteenth century allowed men's (not women's) physical form to reappear out of the clouds in which it had been enveloped by the tailor's art. The simple action of the body corresponded to the simple rhythm of the music.

If we recall the minuets we have seen ourselves at costume balls and in the theater, we seem to be remembering a work of architecture rather than a dance, so plastic, dignified and graceful is the impression created. And it is quite true that architectural art has more than a little in common with the minuet. But possibly a still greater part was played in its development by horticulture. The slow paces and solemn bendings copied from antique movements please the eye in much the same way as rococo gardens, and this is confirmed by the dance steps recorded in the older choreographies, the primers of the art of "treading a measure." The diagrams might be those of shrubberies, round flower-beds, promenades; it is as correct to say that the gardens copy the minuet as that the minuet is modelled on the gardens.

Music, gymnastics, architecture, horticulture. But the greatest triumph of all was achieved in the minuet by the tailors and dress-makers, whose art is so often despised. It was the task of the *haute couture* of the eighteenth century to abolish the magniloquent clothing, the barbaric over-elaboration indulged in by the seventeenth century. The century of baroque had demanded of its humans that they carry on their backs the symbols of their possessions, that their clothing represented the extent of their estates. The following, the aristocratic century aimed at transforming the successors of this appallingly purse-proud generation—the gentleman and his lady—into beings who might still be rich, but must be simple. With the growth of the eighteenth century we find the

disappearance in France of glaring and contrasting colors, of the gigantic full-bellied masses of stiff or hanging draperies. Men's upper garments remained costly, but became more subdued. Half-tones such as pink, pale blue, and silver-grey aided simplification, and the costume of a cavalier was no longer comparable to the blast of a trumpet but rather to the liquid tones of a flute. The retiring nature of true wealth was typified in a man's appearance. Very careful scrutiny was needed to discover the value of his velvet coat, his silver braid, his enamel buttons. The word "noblesse" changed its meaning. From denoting a being set apart from his fellow-men it came to be applied to one whose aim it was to be inconspicuous. The woman who danced the minuet of her epoch was just as perfectly dressed as her cavalier. Her garments were rich, simple, and at the same time expressive of the morals indicated by the figures of the dance. In dancing she never came close to the man and the hoop-skirt symbolized her aloofness. The pivot of the rigid whalebone structure dictated by fashion was the woman herself, who had to be extremely agile. As she guided her bell-shaped skirt through all the avenues of the minuet, from shrubbery to shrubbery, her tiny steps seemed to be much quicker than they really were. Under the immense calm of the hooped skirt her little high-heeled shoes twinkled along like birds. Or, to put it better, their effect was that of twin clappers in a bell suspended from her waist. The upper half of the woman seemed all the more alive because of the apparent division at the waist and the rigidity of the hoop-skirt below it. Her bosom seemed to breathe more intensely and the circles described by her arms to gain in vivacity from the contrast.

Reigning over the woman's trunk was her head—very white, very silvery. The tiny black patch, the impertinent "mouche" showing here and there on her face, emphasized the delicacy of her complexion. Coiffures were never ostentatious; in the best

epoch of the minuet a woman's hair was arranged as a foil to the contours of her face. From time to time barbarous fashions appear which turn a woman's head-dress into the main focal point of her appearance. But no over-elaboration was tolerated by the epoch of the minuet, the century of good taste *par excellence*.

The arts of the dressmaker and the hairdresser contributed to grace and dignity of carriage, and were subordinate to the gymnastic requirements of the minuet. Knowledge of the body influenced the delicate geometry of the dance-steps; the architectural foundation enriched the dance and the art of dancing the musical expression. The performance of a minuet became the composite work of art of the age.

When the age was struck by lightning, its wreckage crushed the minuet.

#### THE ROUND DANCE OF THE REVOLUTION

On July 14, 1789, the people of Paris stormed the Bastille. That day marked the end of a series of centuries and a new epoch began. With that 14th of July vital sensation was transformed.

In the midst of populous Paris, the Bastille was the fortress of absolutism. For many a century its cells and cellars had shut in innocent persons dragged away from their families on the strength of a mere warrant for their arrest. Human beings of all classes languished behind those walls. Ugly and ungainly the fortress stood within the city, ready with its invisible arms to drag new sacrifices into its depths. Millions of people had seen it, full of hatred and yet convinced that it was impregnable. And then one morning there happened something that had been thought impossible: men appeared, singing songs and carrying guns. They might have been on their way to Versailles where the King lived, but they congregated round the Bastille.

The cannons of the Bastille faced the district of St. Antoine, the

## THE BIRTH OF THE WALTZ

poverty-stricken suburb of the workers. The defense of the fort was left to a handful of pensioners and Swiss guards under an energetic commander. Absolutism should either have defended its Bastille better or not at all. As a decayed tooth disappears from a living mouth, so the Bastille disappeared from Paris. The operation was quite simple and yet it ushered in the greatest revolution of all times. It was the beginning of the French revolution.

The blows struck at the Bastille destroyed absolutism and the sheltered life of the privileged classes, and with these fell a whole proud epoch. The eighteenth century was dead—over its ruins resounded the symphony played by the cannons of the people. The aristocratic minuet gave way to the round dance of the revolution.

After the attack the bloodstained wreckage of the stronghold was razed to the ground. Where the towers of terror had stood, a board was put up with the words: ICI L'ON DANSE.

The German historian Ludwig Häusser looks on this "French jest" as the height of frivolity. In actual fact the inscription was an expression of naïveté; for those who had stormed the Bastille the dance was the natural end of the battle. There was no greater contrast conceivable than that of a prison with its pale, sad inmates and the heavenly airs of freedom which were now wafted over the open square. As in the last act of Beethoven's *Fidelio* bacchantic frenzy dominates the scene, so the souls of the people demanded that they should *dance* on the ruins of the Bastille.

Is there not something strikingly operatic about the French revolution? The events of the revolution, apart from their serious nature, are highly pantomimic. Theatrical, pantomimic elements are visible on all pictures of the period, and it would be a mistake to believe that this is only because the artists of the time were incapable of expressing themselves otherwise. It is more likely that political acts like the storming of the Bastille were immediately felt by all the participants to be a rhythmical procession and a mass



pantomime. Anyone who denies this underestimates the aesthetic roots at the base of all mass actions.

A contemporary drawing shows a circular attack on the Bastille with combatants dissolved into groups with vertical musketry-fire and horizontally pointed cannons. The drawing is most realistic. Nevertheless it smacks of pantomime. Another drawing depicts the dawn of the "Hour of Liberty" with the fall of the Bastille. The prisoners emerge; again we recall *Fidelio*. To the drums of the national militia old men embrace their grandchildren, women throw themselves on their husbands' breasts. A prostrate prisoner is being carried on a bier by members of the People's Guard past piled-up paving-stones which have just served as missiles in the battle. The prevailing notes are joy in rhythm and the scenic portrayal of complete abandonment to the pathos of the moment. It is quite impossible that this picture was conceived at the dictates of mere fashion. It was the artistic expression of the glorified deed derived from life itself at first hand.

How strange too had been the preparations for the storming of the Bastille. The people of Paris had no weapons, or at least too few. They had been obliged to storm the arms depots in the Town Hall and the armories on the Place Vendôme. But parts of these were museums—and so it happened that the shrieking mob bore along medieval tournament swords, ancient helmets and halberds, thirteenth century coats of mail and axes from the Crusades, side by side with modern cannons. Naturally, the love of dressing-up played its part here too. Thus the storming of the Bastille, the first of the great mass slaughters of the French revolution began as an unconscious bacchanal in which all human passions had their parts to play in rhythmical succession. The general dance after the event was the grand finale of the pantomime.

It was a round dance they danced on that occasion, a new dance; a few years later it was called the Carmagnole. It represented the

## THE BIRTH OF THE WALTZ

surrounding of the Bastille by the people for like every other dance it was a dumb show. A pole played the part of the stronghold. Green branches were tied on to this and it was crowned with the Phrygian cap of the slave-prisoners (the "bagno" slaves). Once thrust on to the head of the pole, the slave-cap became the symbol of liberty. Round the guy thus constructed women of the revolution joined hands and swung themselves, with screams of mockery and rejoicing. All to a very simple rhythm, not unlike that of the German *Rheinländer*.

Standing on one leg and swinging the other, now forward with the right foot, now with the left, they would dance till one of the dancers would use his strong arms to drag the whole company several times round the pole, after which the more tranquil hopping would begin all over again.

This circular hopping does not seem to us to be particularly revolutionary. And yet it was a revolution, because it was completely unregulated. After 1792 the people sang

*"Dansons la Carmagnole  
Vive le son du canon!"*

The syncopation of a detonating cannon-shot was the irregular rhythm to which they conformed. That was a slap in the face for all those who had till then danced the minuet, the beautiful, regular dance of society. Significant innovations in the Carmagnole were the hop, till then taboo, and the swift circular rush, the strictly forbidden rotatory movement.

Did the Bastille dancers really think that their method of dancing was new? Then they were mistaken. In their revolt they had only returned unconsciously to one of the oldest of all dances. They had re-discovered the species of popular dance favored by their ancestors five hundred, a thousand years before. In the early Middle Ages when the French were still Franks, before the French

and the Germans had become two separate nations, the only kind of dance in Europe was the round dance, the only step the hop.

The Carmagnole was a reproduction of the dance round the Maypole described for us by many a medieval poet, a dance which was placid or bacchantic according to the temperament of the dancers. It had been danced in Swabia, in Alsace, on the Danube and on the Elbe, in Denmark and in Paris. Everywhere in fact where the people rejoiced, this had been their dance. After the fall of the Bastille the people of Paris rejoiced. To strange wild music and clad in wild garments they danced their age-old joy. The fallen French monarchy, mocked by the masses as it lay crushed and beaten now took the place of Winter in the ancient dance symbolizing the victory of Spring.

Like the Carmagnole, fashion negatived all that had gone before, at least all that had immediately preceded it. The fashion of the great revolution, incomprehensible to us in its fantastic and orgiastic ugliness becomes comprehensible when it is recognized as a carnivalesque protest against all that the hated ruling caste had lately considered beautiful. The truncated, cautious, bowing step of the minuet? Away with it! The brutal hop must take its place. Powdered hair? On the contrary! The aristocrats loved to call us "dogs." What is the retort of our new aestheticism? We will dress our hair to look like pendant dogs' ears. The orderly cavalier of rococo times wore breeches, did he? Short leggings with white stockings? Well, that's reason enough for us to wear the trousers of galley-slaves, trousers in red and blue striping. That looks ridiculous, does it? So much the better! The blue, white and red stripes shall be our national colors.

Take away the intentionally carnivalesque, the foolishly hysterical garments, imagine medieval doublets on these bodies and we have the dance of Spring all over again. Danced on the green

## THE BIRTH OF THE WALTZ

before the gates of the city of Paris, the round dance of the Germans was re-born. The German word *deutsch* comes from "diet," i.e. "people." The populace, therefore, when it took to dancing did so in the German manner irrespective of locality. There came a moment in all mass round dances when the circle broke up, when in the wild whirl each unit would cling to its neighbor on one side only; that was the psychological moment when the girdle of compatriots broke into couples one woman to one man.

Stamp while you whirl—whirl while you stamp. That was the popular style, the German style; that was how couples had danced for a thousand years.

### DANCE MOVEMENTS

Stamping and whirling. These combined activities which horrified good society in Europe were for many centuries the principal features of the popular dance.

Why did people stamp while they danced? Why did they jump into the air? They wanted to leave the plane on which they were living, to get away from the earth. Driven by ecstatic desire they tried it. But they fell back—so they stamped.

The new German school, founded by the eminent scholar, Professor Karl Bücher with his book *Arbeit und Rhythmus*, assumes a different cause. If all dances ought to be looked upon as a dumb show representing some form of work, if dancing is always mimicry, then, in the opinion of this school, the jumping and stamping of human beings may be taken to represent a kind of mass memory of grape-treading.

However that may be, stamping is found in the *Ländler* (early popular waltz form) from the beginning of the Middle Ages. Lenau, the Great Austrian poet, found the deep-seated reason for this. In his "Styrian Dance" he gives an explanation of the practice

JOHANN STRAUSS THE ELDER

of stamping. A hunter is dancing and "the banks of the body confine him too closely," so that "the stream of rejoicing bursts out into flood."

And then comes Lenau's inspired idea which has, however, not been taken up by students of folklore:

See where he stamps the earth  
In his unbounded joy.  
He spurns the earth and soundly  
He kicks it, kicks again.  
"Our ashes you shall have,  
And no more," he exults.  
His eyes aflame he gazes  
Upon his loved one, certain  
Of immortality.  
"For ever—you and I!"

This stamping then, is the extreme form of a denial of death; the earth, which is to receive our earthly remains only, is rejected, is thrust away. Contemptuously, "for," as Nietzsche says, "all desire strives for eternity."

In the world of the minuet, stamping was strictly prohibited. It had been forbidden before in the world of the Renaissance and in the baroque period. In fact it was forbidden everywhere where figure dances were danced in courtly fashion, such dances for example as the Pavane, the Passemazzo, the Chaconne, the Saraband.

The world of good taste abhorred the whirl. How came human beings to think of whirling? It is even less a primitive movement of mankind than the hop. It produces an actual physical revulsion. The revulsion is due to the fear of giddiness deeply ingrained in us all.

The word "waltz" did not exist before 1780. The verb *walzen* however, existed and occurred in the German language (both written and spoken) in the Middle Ages. But it was rare. The verb *walzen* comes from the Latin *volvere*. "The highest heavens stand

still and do not rotate (*walzen*)," says Konrad von Megenberg, a German mystic.

Also strange is the use of the word *walzen* in legal language. In the seventeenth century an estate, the owner of which could be changed at will, was called a *walzendes Grundstück*; this was in contrast to estates which could not be separated from the landed property of which they formed part.

Rotating dances were forbidden in Bavaria by the village police, for the first time in 1560. Never before had the word *walzen* been connected with dancing. Round dances had till then been called *Dreher* (*drehen* means "turning" and had provoked such furious opposition for five hundred years that the birth of the waltz in 1780 was something of a miracle).

At the inception of the modern era, police edicts were in force in all German cities, forbidding not only hopping and stamping (which had already been forbidden by Charlemagne) but still more fiercely the shameless "turning" of women by men. The love pantomime inherent in the round dance was the real trouble. Dancing was to consist only of "steps"; the figures might represent wooing, but never the conquest of the girl by the man, by the hunter. "Nobody," thus the Nuremberg decree, "may swing or turn a woman round in the dance." Saxon edicts speak of "improper and horrible turnings"; Magdeburg, Prenzlau, Greifswald, and Frankfurt penalized rotating couples by heavy fines.

From the satirical literature which more or less took the place of newspapers at the time, we learn that it was not only morality which was affronted by hopping and whirling. ("Hans throws Else in such a way that her skirts fly up and reveal too much"). Popular hygiene had a word to say too. The prevalence of overfeeding at that time made dancing almost dangerous to life. According to the report of the satirist Neidhardt von Reuenthal, "one peasant had rotated so long that his ears, nose and mouth were filled with

blood and one could see the violent beating of his heart on both sides of his head; it seemed to him that there were seven suns in the sky. He ran around like a whirling pot, his head was full of giddiness and he thought he was drowning . . ." In other words, a hemorrhage. In the fourteenth century an ecclesiastical dignitary, Bishop Johann von Miltitz, jumped so high into the air while dancing that he fell down dead. With their stamping and whirling the performers literally danced themselves to death.

So it was not only the *codex elegantiarum* of the French courts which for centuries stifled the popular dance. On the contrary, in Germany, in England and in Italy, in fact in the whole of Europe there was general agreement on grounds both of morals and of health to forbid popular dancing or hold it up to ridicule. Together with the old forms of the feudal system, the great French revolution destroyed the code of manners pertaining to the minuet. The citizenry, the Third Estate, now danced unhindered both the ancient round dances and the *Ländler*. Thus the waltz, or rather its rudiments which had just begun to emerge from the *Ländler*, became the democratic dance.

Here too we may observe the will to protest. It became a democratic dance because its principal content, the whirl, was strictly forbidden by aristocratic standards. The minuet and the waltz, the dance of the gentleman and the dance of the bourgeois could not exist side by side; there was eternal hostility between them. Nevertheless, in a classic scene, Mozart succeeded in harmonizing them just once. The scene is in *Don Giovanni*, Act II. Don Ottavio has taken Donna Anna and Donna Elvira by the tips of their fingers and led them into the house of Don Giovanni. Then follows the simplest and noblest minuet of all time danced by Don Giovanni representing manhood, Don Ottavio as the flower of knighthood, Donna Anna as dignified woman, and Donna Elvira as the grand lady.

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But this is not only a fête for gentlefolk. The peasant, Masetto, is marrying Zerline, so a number of peasants are bidden to the feast given by Don Giovanni, the haughty and high-spirited nobleman who is about to seduce Zerline. How do the peasants react to the minuet? It was a diabolical idea of Mozart's to make the servant Leporello suddenly seize the clumsy lout Masetto and start stamping a *Ländler* with him in spite of his struggles, all to the solemn tones of the minuet danced by the noble company. Masetto tries to break away; it does not seem to him to be a suitable moment for "stamping and whirling," but Leporello is stronger. Thus Masetto dances a village waltz against his will in the three-quarter time to which nobility and beauty are executing their minuet. In this scene the lower classes are held up to ridicule in the persons of Leporello and Masetto. But with the coming of the French revolution the common people's *Ländler* destroyed the aristocratic minuet.

## THE POPULAR ELEMENTS IN VIENNA

No such scene as the one just described could have been written by a Frenchman. The extreme bitterness of political feeling in France would have prevented any humorous treatment of the subject. But Mozart was an Austrian. He was a member of cultural circles in which by a happy chance the contrast between the upper classes on the one hand and the mass of peasants and bourgeois on the other was not so sharply defined as in France. The Austrian nobles fostered a patriarchal relationship to the people over whom they ruled and among whom they lived. Cultural history tells how



the Austrian Habsburgs gradually abandoned Spanish forms and ceremonies. The Empress Maria Theresa and her son the Emperor Joseph II, unlike the Emperor Charles V, did not seem like strange gods to the people under their rule. The Austrian Habsburgs were urbane, friendly, simple, almost like ordinary citizens; they were humorous or at least affected humor. They respected the customs of the people, or at least acted as if they respected them.

Their example influenced the nobles who exuded affability and kindness. The nobles in their turn were imitated by the numerous wealthy citizens, the Austrian bourgeoisie. And what of the huge mass of the poor to be found in Vienna as elsewhere? It did not feel so betrayed, so robbed of human dignity, so humiliated as in Paris. In a state the principal lands of which are made up of large estates belonging to the nobility, there must of course be an unsolved social problem. But it does not leap to the eye in such a terrible form. The gruesome juxtaposition of diamond-bedizened nobles and howling ragged proletarians was to be found in the streets of Paris, but it never existed in Vienna. To sum up, it may be said that in the Vienna of the eighteenth century the nobles for whom Haydn and Mozart composed were rich, but not shameless. And the populace was not so poor as in Paris.

There was distinction of classes in Vienna as elsewhere. But the distinctions were graded, their edges were not so mercilessly sharp. Members of the proletariat reached out into the citizenry and the nobles were fond of disporting themselves as simple citizens. Though there could not be even the appearance of democracy, social distinctions—from the Court downwards—were very cleverly kept in a state of flux.

The history of the dance contributes a curious and important fact to the thousand details of politico-cultural history. Under Maria Theresa and under the Emperor Joseph II the minuet no longer reigned alone at the Court balls. An occasional *Ländler*

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was danced to demonstrate that the Imperial Court had its roots in the people. Mozart expressed his amazement that Emperor Joseph should have invited three thousand simple Viennese citizens of both sexes to a Court ball at Schönbrunn, and observed that this meant that any number of "hairdressers and housemaids" attended it. When the Imperial Opera performed Martin's *Così fan tutte* in which two couples surprisingly danced a waltz instead of the expected minuet, this created no sensation.

In Vienna then there was no ban on round dances. No alien aestheticism imposed restrictions on the dances favored by the populace, so there were no bonds to be burst by a violent revolt. The last fifth of the century saw the birth of the waltz as the direct offspring of the ancient *Dreher*. Eduard von Bauernfeld is right in saying that the only possible birthplace for the waltz was

"the Falstaff of German cities,  
Vienna old and stout."

The popular atmosphere in Vienna was strange; physically, morally, politically and socially it differed greatly from that of Paris. The Vienna of the eighteenth century retained more of the Middle Ages than any other capital city. There are only two kinds of medieval temperament; one is the Gothic, that is the intellectual-aesthetic, the other the materialistic. Vienna was so obviously in the second category that this fact was apparent to all her visitors, to all who described, praised or blamed her.

If we except the aristocracy, the Viennese people must be put down as having been less spiritual and more blatantly materialistic than any other. The inscription on an inn in the Prater may serve to illustrate this:

"May God this house upstanding keep  
Till round the world a snail may creep,  
Or till a thirsty ant maybe  
Has drained the water in the sea."

This desire for permanence is so heathen in character as to be astounding. It contrasts sharply with the Christian view of life which accentuates the impermanency of all earthly things. In the Austrian Alpine lands we still find inscriptions on houses which express sentiments directly opposed to the above. The following is an example:

"Who owns this house then, can you say?  
Grandfather, father passed away;  
I know not who may follow me.  
Who can this house's owner be?"

That is Christian because it takes the next world into consideration and emphasizes the questionable nature of possessions. But a Viennese does not like to be reminded of the brevity of existence. In the midst of surroundings steeped in the sadness of the Alps and the tremors of Christian religion, the true Viennese of the eighteenth century cultivated his passionate love of life. He desired his world to remain as it was. It was to endure for the time a snail would require to creep round the earth or an ant to drink up the sea.

The Berlin bookseller and much-traveled philosopher Nicolai saw these matters very clearly. He was not a classical witness in the eyes of the Austrians, because in his Protestant hostility to the Catholic Church, he was fond of stressing the "low education and coarsely materialistic attitude" of such countries as have not adhered to Luther's doctrines. Here, however, we are not discussing Nicolai's obsession that Catholicism "as an empty exhibitionary religion only strengthens heathenism," but his precise information concerning Viennese habits and customs. "The feasting and good living in Vienna is universally known. The inhabitants of Vienna are very much more advanced than the dwellers in any other German city in respect of everything contributing to the comforts and voluptuousness of life; moreover, they boast of it. In this gen-

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eral luxury very little thought is given to its disadvantageous consequences. And indeed one need only consult the records in Vienna to see how many people die of apoplexy. Anyone who is in Vienna need only take note of the many faces with a rapturous expression, the many fleshy youths, the many pendulous cheeks of middle-aged people, in order to be convinced how very strongly the greater part of the population inclines to repletion and to apoplexy."

The wrath aroused by these remarks of Nicolai's in Vienna was immeasurable. But the wrath was misplaced. Pezzl who was certainly a loyal Viennese with no inclination to calumny, reports (on the basis of statistics) that in the year 1786 the city of Vienna consumed the following:

Oxen .....	42,197 head.
Cows .....	1,511 "
Calves .....	66,353 "
Sheep .....	43,925 "
Lambs .....	164,700 "
Pigs .....	96,949 "
Suckling pigs .....	12,967 "
Austrian wines .....	454,063 barrels.
Hungarian and Southern wines .....	19,276 "
Beer .....	382,578 "

When we recall that the population of Vienna including strangers in transit was only 220,000, the amount of food consumed seems immense. It is explicable not only by the Viennese craving for enjoyment, but also by the cheapness of all articles of food, which in the last quarter of the century was unexampled. About 1786, it was possible to obtain the following menu for thirteen Kreuzer: soup, vegetables, fried liver, beef, bread, and a quarter-liter of wine. People who lived in this fashion of course formed the greatest possible moral and social contrast to the population of Paris. In the one case there was a majority of well-fed, contented people in love with their own life. In the other a monarch and a class of nobles

who possessed, amassed and consumed all the goods of this world, and side by side with them, a majority of literally starving people, subsisting on a surfeit of political dreams. The political destinies of Vienna and Paris were bound to be as divergent as possible.

"The common man in Vienna," Nicolai continues, "is not a friend of continuous work. He demands pastimes and amusements. He cries for *panem et circenses*, and he does not care whether his distractions are secular or religious. Fried chicken and fireworks or pilgrimages and fried chicken—he welcomes either.

"There are a large number of gardens in the suburbs of Vienna where the common people congregate. Nothing is more characteristic of these than that they are by five o'clock every day crowded with artisans. In one of these gardens I counted thirty-eight skittle alleys; so it is easy to imagine what large crowds were to be found there. But only the minority was occupied with the somewhat laborious game of skittles, the majority preferred the more comfortable and substantial pastime of eating. It is pleasant to see people so at ease—if one does not happen to think of what they are missing at home. They sit there as if God had made them for the sole purpose of eating. The common man in Bavaria is not a small eater; in Swabia he eats a great deal, in Switzerland too. But nowhere does the common man eat as much as in Vienna and nowhere has he so fully attained his goal when he has done nothing but eat.

"If one strolls through the Prater on Sundays and holidays it is as good as a play to see how heartily the people are enjoying themselves. Among other things I saw a merry-go-round in motion, with people on it and rings for them to stab at. On these there were twelve or more persons at a time, not only four as is elsewhere more usual. But those who were being so effortlessly rotated appreciated the amusement only as an agreeable movement, not as a merry-go-round proper and employed their time in a much

better and more useful way; while being rotated they would eat their fried chickens and crescent rolls and take no notice of the rings provided for stabbing. Even this minute exertion seemed to give them too much trouble.

"Among the popular places of amusement are the many dance-halls scattered about the suburbs. No stranger should fail to visit them. Most of them are not looked upon as in any way doubtful or dishonest resorts. The public dance-hall with the best reputation is that called "Beim Mondenschein auf der Wieden." Here there is a very beautiful hall two storeys high illuminated by several crystal chandeliers. On Sundays it harbors a great many shopkeepers, prosperous young citizens and lower grade State employees with their wives and daughters. The dance consists of a continuous turning in circles, often performed by twenty persons in succession. It is, however, a very moderate movement, and as women in Vienna have good figures and beautiful faces, this dance is really a pleasant sight. But the fact that the dancers can continue these slow and monotonous movements for many hours at a time without finding them dull indicates the almost inborn love of Austrians for leisurely comfort."

Nicolai's fixed notion that the Viennese were lazy, merely because he did not observe them constantly at work like the inhabitants of Berlin, here played him a trick. He thought them lazy because they were leisurely. But the science of physics sees in inertia, in the law of inertia, not the absence but the presence of energy; it is impossible to divert a spinning-top in full rotation from its path. The population of Vienna was a spinning-top and therefore it did not move out of its path.

Paris had its 1789; Vienna did not. Paris was political; Vienna was unpolitical, even anti-political. The brother of the unhappy Queen of France, the German Emperor Joseph II, showed psychological perception when he encouraged his beloved Viennese to

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enjoy life to the full. He opened to the public the Prater and the Imperial "Augarten" so that their amusements might be less hampered and more exhaustive. He also did something else to help the Austrian State over the approaching world crisis, something far-seeing and effective. As a convinced enemy of the Church the Emperor directed all the forces animating political malcontents away from his own government and against the Catholic Church. The Church was more powerful than the Emperor, so that he did the Church no real harm. But by this means he saved the House of Habsburg from an Austrian revolution. In its detestation of the great French revolution, the Viennese people very soon succeeded in establishing a peaceful relationship not only with Joseph's successors, the Emperors Leopold and Franz, but also with the Catholic Church.

### THE DEMONIC FORCES

The opinions of contemporaries on popular life in Vienna in the age of the Emperor Joseph are interesting but in one respect incomplete. They pass over its demoniac foundation. Vienna is a very old city in which lie buried the misery, suffering and the joys of centuries; it is a cemetery of memories of epidemics and conflagrations, floods and hostile invasions. Everything that has ever happened to move the spirit to tears or to joy and festivity has its effect on the bodies of the people. And as for the dances danced in Vienna in the age of the Emperor Joseph II, they were performed on the barely cooled ashes of the times that had gone before. The great siege by the Turks had only happened a hundred years before, and the plague a hundred and ten. Nicolai and other literati were amazed by the dance mania in Vienna, but they did not perceive the abyss out of which the demon of the dance had emerged. It was the flight from death that the Viennese citizen

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danced. He rotated in the dance in order to forget what lay outside.

In its feral intensity the Viennese craving for amusement seemed a legacy from the popular festivals of the ancients, the feasts of Bacchus and Venus, the saturnalia of the Romans. Till after the death of Lessing, Mozart and Joseph II, till 1796, people in Vienna would pay money to see wolves and bears fighting or a lion destroying a lamb in a theater devoted to the purpose. When the theater was burnt down and the Emperor Franz refused to erect a new building "for such horrible and disgraceful spectacles," the Viennese were in despair, so entirely sensual were the reactions of the masses. Strangers saw only passive elements in the Viennese love of enjoyment. They overlooked the fact that such bottomless inexhaustible pleasure in dancing, eating, drinking and loving was an active quality derived from an excess of energy. The Viennese were not flabby. They were a strong and primitive people in whom Romans, Celts, Teutons, Huns and Slavs were mixed as in a gigantic cauldron. Earthly desires kept this mixture of peoples in a ferment. It needed stirring up. This task was accomplished by the waltz with its compelling rhythm. It made the people rotate and the pace was terrific.

A Viennese journal on manners and customs, popular and written in dialect, describes as with the brush of a Peter Breughel the diabolic scenes enacted in the dance. Pawnshops were stormed and possessions pledged in order that money might be obtained for the carnival. The British actor O'Kelly, a friend of Mozart's, reports the following incident: At one of these bacchanalian fêtes which he was visiting incognito, the Emperor Joseph II was addressed by a masked man costumed to represent the philosopher Diogenes. He was wandering in the midst of the crazed human throng and, like the Greek, "seeking with a lantern for a human being." When



he recognized the Emperor he bowed deeply, opened his lantern, extinguished the light and said, "*Ho trovato il uomo.*" Then he departed.

This same O'Kelly writes in his memoirs, "In my time (1786) the people in Vienna had the dance mania. When carnival time drew near, merriment broke out everywhere; with the advent of the festival period proper its manifestations exceeded all bounds. The Redoutensaal in which the masked balls were held were in the Kaiserburg; though they were of vast extent, they seemed like a bottle-neck, tightly packed with masked figures. The passion for dancing and masquerades was so pronounced among Viennese ladies that nothing could make them curtail their favorite amusement. This went so far that for expectant mothers who could not be induced to stay at home separate rooms were provided with all conveniences; rooms indeed in which the child could be brought into the world if unhappily this should prove necessary. The arrangement was discussed in all seriousness in my presence, and I am almost convinced that cases really arose which demonstrated the utility of this arrangement. The ladies of Vienna," O'Kelly continues, "are particularly famous for their grace and their movements in rotating, an exercise of which they never tire. I for my part considered that waltzing from 10 o'clock at night till 7 o'clock in the morning was a form of continuous frenzy, tiring for both eyes and ears, not to speak of other and worse consequences . . ."

For a moment O'Kelly seems doubtful whether or not he had been purposely ridiculed on account of his poor knowledge of German. But that he could for one moment believe the fairy tale of the *chambres d'accouchement* proves the strength of his visual impression of the Viennese ladies and their crazy urge for dancing. He thought it quite possible that they would dance till overtaken by the labors of childbirth; why not, since it had already been proved that they would dance themselves to death?

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The writer Adolf Bäuerle who as a native of Vienna possibly understood these matters better than Nicolai (who came from Berlin), gives the following description. "The Mondschein Saal made an immortal name for itself by the mortality among the young people who visited it and there danced nothing but *Langaus*. At that time it was the fashion to be a dashing dancer, and so the man had to whirl his partner from one end of the hall to the other with the greatest possible despatch. If one round of the immense hall had been considered sufficient, one might perhaps have allowed this bacchantic dance to pass. But the circuit had to be made six to eight times at top speed and without pause. Each couple sought to better the performance of the rest and it was no rare thing for apoplexy of the lungs to put an end to the madness."

The deadly dance here described by Bäuerle, the one called *Langaus*, was no other than the two-step waltz into which the *Ländler* of hopping and whirling fame had developed in its progress from country to town. Hopping proved to be a hindrance to rapid rotation, so the hop was replaced by the sliding step which had long been known in drawing-room dances. The slide made the movement of the dancers more flexible and was therefore no check on their speed. The staccato of the round dance disappeared; in its stead came a *glissando*. Gliding rotation replaced stamping rotation as an expression of the gaiety of the epoch. It was more refined, but at the same time speedier, more productive of giddiness and more demoniac than the figures of the ancient *Ländler*.

With the lightning rapidity of the two-step waltz, Vienna was approaching the year 1800. She galloped in frenzied happiness past the great revolution and past all political obstacles; even the wretched wars of 1794 and 1799 did not halt her progress. She was sustained by the mania of the dance.

What was this dance? A narcotic? Or its opposite—something regenerative? We do not know. A strange concoction, heavy with

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sweetness, demoniac frenzy and follies and yet leavened by a certain nobility.

Let us turn to the man who tasted of this product as did no other composer; to the man who, sprung from the masses, ruled over the masses with greater power than any other contemporary; to the man whom Richard Wagner called the nerve demon; to Johann Strauss.

## From Empire to Biedermeier

*How potent is the attraction exercised by the waltz. As soon as the first bars start, countenances are cleared, eyes sparkle and bodies are attacked by anticipatory tremors. The graceful spinning-tops form, start moving, cross each other's paths, pass each other by . . . It was a spectacle worth seeing. Those marvelously beautiful women, covered in flowers and diamonds, carried along by the irresistible music, reclining in the arms of their partners; and then the glossy silk and the delicate gauze of their dresses sharing every movement and falling in graceful cascades; finally, the ecstatic delight breathed from charming faces when fatigue forced their owners to leave the heavenly regions and gather new strength from the earth.*

COUNT DE LA GARDE,  
"Der Wiener Kongress."

### THE BIRTH AND YOUTH OF JOHANN STRAUSS

March 14, 1804, the day on which Johann Strauss was born, was a day on which most people would have preferred to creep out of the world. There was both snow and rain and the sun hardly showed its face. The nurse would not come at first and there was great excitement till she changed her mind. The weak child which the innkeeper Franz Strauss took into his arms after its birth was baptized by the Carmelites and given the name of Johann.

The alehouse keeper Franz Strauss and his wife Barbara, née Tollmann, were the owners of the tavern in the Leopoldstadt called "Zum Guten Hirten" (To the Good Shepherd). A queer enough name for an ale-house. The man who was later to unite the Viennese waltz to Viennese wine, was born in the uninspired and smoky surroundings of beer casks. The house was situated in the Flossgasse. The carriers and Danube boatmen on their way from Bavaria towards Hungary, all of them tall, broad-shouldered men, were the first faces to crowd round the cradle of little Johann. In spite of the refinement and delicacy that he retained all his life, he was well acquainted with grossness. He was born as a child of the people.

Leopoldstadt was an island in the Danube, then still a racing stream. The houses were poor, the streets for the most part mediæval. There were, however, a few broader roads, the best known of which was called the Jägerzeile. Leopoldstadt was Vienna's most north-easterly suburb and as such was inhabited by a large number of Poles and Czechs, and particularly by Jewish artisans. That Strauss was of the Jewish race was often alleged later, and still more often denied. Philip Fahrbach, his collaborator, reports that the musicians who played with Strauss had dubbed him the "Jew with the fiddle" on account of the shape of his face and the dark curly hair on his head. Possibly his stepfather was a Jew. When Johann was less than a year old the Danube claimed the innkeeper Franz Strauss. It is not known whether there was an accident or whether melancholy drove him to suicide. Johann's mother, Barbara, then married the innkeeper Golder. Possibly he played in the life of Johann Strauss the same part that the actor Geyer played as stepfather in the life of Richard Wagner.

Was it the ugliness of his surroundings or the influence of strangers? Whatever the cause, little Johann Strauss began to dream himself into the land of rhythm in order to flee from the smoke

and the noise. He would take up a stick and wave it in three-quarter time, or he would take one stick as a bow and another as a fiddle, just as Haydn had done when he was still a child. His kind-hearted stepfather gave him a Berchtesgaden fiddle for a fête-day present. It was a very ordinary Bavarian product and quite valueless, but when it was tuned one could play on it. And when the tone was too dry and thin, little Johann would take a beer mug from the table and pour the contents into his violin until the bitter yellow drink squirted out of the holes. That made the tone more subtle, moister and therefore more sentimental. On this caricature of a violin little Strauss would fiddle whatever he could pick up—street ballads, dance tunes, marches, Bavarian ditties. At that time he could not read music.

He and the violin became inseparable. He would bring back bad reports from school when, having placed it under his desk, he would lose himself in dreams and pluck at it as if it were a zither. His masters were powerless to break through the ring of music with which the little fellow surrounded himself. He learnt hardly anything, until one day a good-natured teacher who had heard him playing a waltz, went to the boy's parents and called their attention to their small son's great musical talent. A few good friends of the innkeeper's did likewise and this stimulated the little boy's pride and ambition to such a degree that one day he told his horrified stepfather that he wanted to be a musician. This was a great shock, as the innkeeper of the Good Shepherd was well acquainted with musicians in their most repugnant aspect. To him came the so-called "dinner fiddlers"; these ragged alehouse musicians would play the entire afternoon and evening in exchange for a dish of meat. Socially they were of a still lower grade than comedians, though possibly a few degrees higher than prostitutes.

It never occurred to the innkeeper that little Johann might perhaps become a different kind of musician from such alehouse fid-

dlers, that he might for instance develop into a musical scholar like Mozart and Haydn. He had neither the money nor the influence to raise his stepson out of the ranks of the bourgeoisie, nor had he the slightest intention of so doing. But on the other hand, his little Johann was not to rank lower than the bourgeoisie. So he apprenticed him to an acquaintance, the bookbinder Lichtscheidl.

Apprenticed to a bookbinder! This was a bitter blow to Johann. If only he had had time to read the books, then he could have made himself as learned as Mr. Joachim Perinet who wrote farces for the theater, or Mr. Ignaz Franz Castelli, the journalist and short-story writer who was much admired when he came to the alehouse. But the insides of the books were not for him. He was occupied only with the unpleasant skins in which they were bound, and the skins stank of glue.

In fact, Johann's whole existence at that time smelt of glue. He would often cry and scream and refuse to use the scissors or the knife. He would throw his tools on the floor in anger until the master would beat him, carry him off to a shed and lock him in. His wife, a good soul, would liberate the child. And thus it went on until the boy, who was both melancholy and wild, had had enough of it. So little Strauss ran away from his apprenticeship, much as did the man who was later to be his friend, the famous popular poet Ferdinand Raimund, who had been apprenticed by his obtuse father to a pastrycook. There Raimund to his life-long regret learnt very little German grammar, but in its stead "the conjugation of tarts and currants." Johann escaped more quickly and quite unharmed when he ran away from Lichtscheidl's workshop.

He carried his fiddle under his arm and that was all he had. Where was he to go? It was a pleasant summer afternoon and the Kahlenberg was watching over Vienna, calm and beautiful as al-

ways. So Johann ran out of Vienna—then still girdled by bastions—uphill, through the suburb of Döbling, past Grinzing, towards the Kahlenberg. The Kahlenberg, then as always, was to the Viennese much what the Fujiyama is to the Japanese. They loved it as they loved the tower of St. Stephen's Cathedral and sought a blessing on every important decision by making a pilgrimage to the Kahlenberg.

It was to this idyllic mountain-top behind which the summer sun was just beginning to set, that little Johann Strauss made his way. He had a practical reason for this too; on the summit was a casino, where he hoped that in the evening he might earn a few kreuzer by his fiddling. He had no money at all and did not know where he would be able to spend the night. But when he found himself on the gentle uphill slope, the landscape enthralled him and he forgot his purpose entirely. He sat down in a vine-plantation and gazed with tired eyes, still reddened from crying, across the Danube towards Moravia and past Vienna towards Hungary. A majestic feeling of well-being, born of the evening glow, pervaded the boy's wearied soul. He sat among the vines and beside him danced a cloud of tiny gnats. Light as a breath, delicately beautiful as a gossamer veil, the happy little creatures flitted aimlessly about him. Hundreds of them, very tiny, chased and repulsed each other, lost and found each other again. It was a lovely sight and surely it was all very much like music; like a bow stroking the strings and moving the soul to the uttermost depths. Then and there little Johann Strauss knew that he was to become a musician and a great one. He went to sleep.

When he had slept for several hours a man who was passing awakened him in the glittering starlight. His name was Polischansky. He was a friend of the innkeeper's and he recognized Johann. He took him back with him to his house in Döbling and



the next day sent the anxious parents the news that their son had been found. They had been afraid that Johann had thrown himself into the Danube in a fit of pique.

Polischansky saw to it that at last Johann was properly taught. The parents relinquished their opposition and Johann was allowed to become a violinist and even to join a band. His first conductor was the famous, or rather notorious, Pamer.

Conductor Ignaz Michael Pamer united in his own person all the qualities calculated to horrify the normal citizen. He had a violent temper, was addicted to drink, greedy for food and of "Bohemian" habits. But apart from all this, he was a genius, a composer of originality with a wealth of inspiration. Holding his breath with awe, little Strauss (whom he was teaching to play the viola) would watch him every evening when, completely drunk, he would stimulate his musicians with squalls and violent gestures. A large inn, the Goldene Birne was the scene of these musical orgies. One of the pieces played there had been cynically dubbed by Pamer *Blessed Memories of Hütteldorf Beer*. The conductor gave a practical demonstration of a memory developing into a present reality by swilling a mug of the liquid after every Coda. The audience applauded with frenzy and so the beer-waltz had to be repeated some twenty times.

All this, though it was very far from being art, served to show little Johann how intimately connected are an artist and his public—even though the artist was like Michael Pamer at times more or less of a harlequin. Originality finds favor however its exponent may behave. All the same Pamer was a true artist who helped to preserve the almost outworn threads leading back to ancient popular music. With a loving hand he would indite compositions that were half waltz, half *Ländler*. *Linzerische Tänze*, one of his compositions, drew half Vienna to the popular restaurant "Seitzerhof" where, run off on a music box, its melodies recalled to those

present memories of Upper Austria, rural life and Alpine breezes.

Pamer's follies did not prevent him from becoming conductor at the Sperl. This was an establishment visited by a good class of patrons. Though the musicians themselves hardly counted as members of the bourgeoisie, even the rich bourgeois enjoyed the amusement afforded them in the Sperl.

### THE ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS

With the new century Viennese citizens had undergone a transformation. The citizen of 1805 was not the same in character as the citizen of 1785. Like so much else in his life, this change was connected with Paris, though it may be doubted whether he was aware of this.

Strauss was born in the year that saw the beginning of the Imperial era in Europe. This strange, frivolous Empire period actually only lasted for a decade as by 1815 Napoleon had ceased to be Emperor. And yet it impressed its stamp on everything that existed at the time, changing the people even more than the Revolution had done. By the time that Strauss as a boy of fourteen was learning the viola, the arts were no longer patronized by princes as in the eighteenth century. Music was dominated by the bourgeoisie. The great triumph of the bourgeoisie in practically all departments of life began with Napoleon's self-coronation as Emperor of the French in the year 1804. Very conveniently for Europe he had stifled the hydra of the revolution in 1799. He had done double service to the bourgeois, both by protecting them from the Jacobites and by failing to restore the aristocratic monarchy and feudalism of the Bourbons.

The principal gainers by this revolution from above were the Napoleonic military bureaucrats. Next to these came the manufacturers, the industrialists. The new aristocracy created by the Emperor, the members of which soon became dukes and princes,

was recruited from the sons of the bourgeoisie, from the children of artisans and advocates with names such as Murat, Berthier, Bernadotte. All these people grew rich, just as did the industrialists. Its military splendor notwithstanding, the energy radiated by the new Empire was bourgeois in character; this aroused envy in and acted as a revivifying goad on all the bourgeoisies in Europe and not the least on Vienna's.

Vienna was exceedingly hostile to France. Under the Emperor Franz in the year 1805, the government had dared a new war with France and had suffered severe defeat. At Ulm and at Austerlitz Napoleon had been victorious; Vienna itself was in the hands of the enemy. This, however, did not prevent the Viennese from being in exceedingly good spirits very soon afterwards, just as after a thunderstorm the noonday breezes are particularly agreeable. True, the peace conditions had been unfavorable; but then the war against the French Emperor, the invincible miracle man, had not been very popular either. Could not the two great Empires keep the peace with one another? With their increased self-confidence, the bourgeoisie gave itself up to the dance in which defeats might be forgotten.

The smoky old public-houses in which a great deal of the dancing had taken place under Joseph II now became too crowded. It was the period in which the beginnings of mechanical industry opened up great possibilities; the citizens had grown wealthier and needed new playgrounds for their new sense of well-being. Speculators, relying on the popular craze for dancing, invested huge sums in the building of monster ballrooms in Vienna; these were extremely luxurious and blatantly Parisian in style. The Empire of the Emperor Franz II visibly patterned itself on the Empire of Napoleon the upstart.

As early as 1805 the Frenchman Jean Beauconsin, a caterer who lived in Vienna, transformed the Mondschein Hall in accordance

with Parisian taste. And another Frenchman, Peter Meunieur, in 1806 opened the luxury dance hall to the new world. Chandeliers and wall-brackets turned the place into a fairy-land, and parquet flooring made its first sensational appearance in Vienna. Not even the Redoutensaal in the Hofburg had this. As long as the waltz had remained the *Ländler* with its staccato hops, parquet flooring had been unnecessary, but now that the waltz had become a gliding dance, it came into its own.

Another hall that was to become of great importance in the history of Vienna during the next half-century was the Sperl. On September 29th of the year 1807, Johann Georg Scherzer, who had married the granddaughter of a citizen by the name of Sperlbauer, opened this immense establishment. It was called "Sperl" for short. Inconspicuous in its external appearance, the house contained the luxurious Fortuna hall, in which later young Strauss was to play under conductor Pamer.

The most magnificent of all these establishments, however, was the Apollo Palace. Its unprecedented luxury provided material for descriptions, not only in Vienna, but in the whole of Europe.

It was constructed by Sigmund Wolffsohn, one of the most remarkable persons of the period. Born in London probably in 1767, he came to Austria when he was about thirty. He was a doctor and an orthopedic surgeon, the owner of a factory for surgical appliances which was under imperial patronage and was the only one existing at the time. In the year 1801, he journeyed from Vienna to Berlin, where the College of Medicine awarded him the grand Gold Medal for a case of appliances in three hundred and thirteen parts. In 1803, he showed his improved surgical apparatus to the Czar, and the Czar presented him with a diamond ring in addition to a thousand gold ducats. First and foremost Wolffsohn manufactured artificial limbs movable by their users. This was a humane feat which convinced even kings and em-

perors that he was the man of the age. Europe was just on the eve of great wars. "When I visited Herr Wolffsohn," writes the author of the popular journal *Eipeldauer Briefe*, "I found almost more women than men enjoying the exhibition of his works of art; but indeed they are well worth seeing. Among other things I saw there artificial hands and feet, and if anyone has the misfortune to lose his natural arm, he need only buy one of these artificial substitutes. With them he can cut quills, write, fence, dress himself, and carry out all necessary movements. My dear cousin, since I have seen these artificial appliances I feel almost courageous enough to become a soldier myself. Then there are mechanical chairs on which one can ride and even trot and gallop about the room; I know a very good friend of mine for whose health a horse of that kind would be very good, but riding is just a little too expensive . . ."

Things however that were greatly in demand were produced by Wolffsohn very cheaply. He was called the people's benefactor. For example, any peasant could now buy a rupture belt for a small sum; till then, this article had cost eight gulden or more. Possibly it was Wolffsohn's principle to take little money from the poor but a great deal from the rich and thus satisfy both.

For this reason, he soon turned his very particular attention to cosmetics. He was not deaf to the cries of the newly rich. The new bourgeoisie demanded articles for its ladies which if possible were to be more elegant and more wickedly expensive than those formerly used by the nobility. In consequence, Wolffsohn invented "Kiliocremastre" for ladies and also "Celosphinge" and a large number of other things with exceedingly curious names. His most fashionable product was his health couch. It consisted of a mattress flexibly covered with reindeer skins which could be filled with air in five minutes. This article of beauty culture, in which snobbery and hygiene were ingeniously combined, cost 375 gulden.

Wolffsohn was as strange a being as if he had sprung from the brain of E. T. A. Hoffmann, that apostle of the uncanny. By the appliances his genius created he gave movement back to those whose limbs had been amputated, thus putting an end to the period of inelegant wooden legs and arm stumps. To women he gave youth. He earned enormous sums of money. How was he to invest it? With great intelligence he put everything he had acquired into the entertainment industry. He created for Vienna a dance palace which put everything else in the shade. Nothing to compare with it had been seen for centuries. The Viennese felt very flattered that even Paris had nothing similar.

On January 26th, 1806, Austria had been obliged to conclude with Napoleon the Treaty of Pressburg. This cost the State the Tyrol and Venetia. As a defiant gesture on behalf of pleasure-seeking Vienna, Sigmund Wolffsohn, on the 10th of January 1808, opened his magnificent Apollo Palace. His patriotic excuse was the marriage on that date of the Emperor Franz to his third wife, the young Italian Princess, Ludovica D'Este. The Viennese bourgeoisie celebrated the imperial nuptials by the opening of the new dance palace.

On the previous Christmas day, the astonished public had seen on all the street corners in Vienna white placards calling attention to the new wonder of the world. The placards drew ingenious comparisons between the new Apollo Palace on the one hand and Vauxhall in London and the dance-halls of Paris on the other. All the arts were to be combined in the Apollo rooms as the public would see for themselves. Nor would the usefulness of the Apollo Palace be confined to balls. Private parties could hire it for weddings and christenings. But one would have to give three weeks notice of such happenings, because the halls had been booked for a very long time in advance.

More than 4000 persons were present at the opening. As entrance

fee the huge sum of 25 gulden was demanded, so that the first evening brought 100,000 gulden. But such enormous receipts were very necessary in order that the expenses of construction (the building had been carried out under the famous Moreau) and the wages of the employees might be gradually amortised. The silver exhibited in the dining hall of the house, delivered by the manufacturer Haas, cost 600,000 gulden. An anonymous treatise called *The Journey of the Goddess of the Dance to the Viennese Apollo Palace* describes the dining hall very minutely and incidentally proves that publicity writers existed even then. Terpsichore, the muse of the dance, here writes to the muse of History, "Figure to yourself, my dear Cleo, a circular hall built in the right proportions. At equal intervals Ionic pillars are placed against the blue background of the walls and between these are narrow mirrors with wall brackets. Below the cornice there are little cavities all around the room which are covered by colored glass and illuminated from within. Mythological pictures decorate the ceiling. Set about the room there are 100 round tables, each with its own tasteful easy chairs. On each table there is a center-piece, either a figure, a candelabra or a basin from which springs a water-fountain . . ." Such Pompeian luxury was a sensational attraction in the eyes of the Viennese till then accustomed to the patriarchal sobriety inculcated by Maria Theresa and Joseph. People would pay any price to be able to sit in that hall.

The attractions of the Apollo Palace were not confined to the inclusion of the greatest dance hall in Europe. Wolffsohn, with a remarkable sense of the love of the spectacular entertained by his contemporaries, had also made of his Palace a kind of exhibition with rooms for the spectators decorated in keeping with the exhibits. The historian of the Vienna Congress, August de la Garde, writes: "The interior of the Apollo Palace, which occupied immense space, contained magnificent halls and living shrubberies as

in a garden. From a Turkish pavilion in glaring colors you could wander into the hut of a Laplander. Avenues bordered by fresh lawns planted with numbers of standard roses provided variations in the view. And all this was indoors. In the center of the dining hall there towered an immense rock from which murmurous springs emerged in tumbling cascades, the waters then being collected in tanks full of live fish. All styles of architecture warred with each other in the decoration of these rooms; there was the capricious Moorish style, the pure Greek, and the Gothic style with its rich carving. Everything that could multiply visual enjoyments was to be found here. In one hall a thousand wax candles glittered from chandeliers, while in another magical alabaster lamps copied the mild illumination of a moonlight night. And so one could find in this Palace all degrees and kinds of atmosphere. And while the stern Viennese winter was covering the earth all around with snow, here one could give oneself up to the mild freshness of a sweetly scented Spring."

For the opening performance of this "spectacle" in the most modern sense of the word, Dr. Sigmund Wolffsohn had procured one of the best known and most respected artists. This was Beethoven's friend Johann Nepomuk Hummel, once Mozart's champion pupil, the greatest pianist of the age. He wrote for the Apollo a series of ten waltzes combined as a suite. They took half an hour to play and have a very remarkable place in the history of dance music. They are the first "Concert Waltzes."

They show with great clarity that music is the most conservative of all the arts. The tonal art absorbs new social impulses much more slowly than literature. Hummel had not the slightest intention of fulfilling Wolffsohn's real purpose. Or rather, he could not have done so even if he had wanted to. He was no dance composer. It is hardly possible to dance to his waltzes, which are really good music. They sound like a minuet:



# JOHANN STRAUSS THE ELDER



Before Lanner and Johann Strauss gave the bourgeoisie the melodies expressing their attitude to life, it was very seldom that they were provided with the waltz music they wanted. Either they were treated to *Ländler* which no longer completely satisfied them; or Johann Nepomuk Hummel wrote what the critics called "*une musique large et expressive*" which was coldly ceremonial but impossible to dance to.

The exhibitionary character of the Wolffsohn establishment made it necessary to have the entire internal decoration constantly renewed, costly though it was, in order to satisfy the urge for the sensational and spectacular by which the Viennese were driven. These changes were like the staging of a new play and were constantly swallowing large sums of money. Wolffsohn re-designed the halls on new principles in the autumn of his very first year. But when he opened for the carnival season in January, 1809, this time taking care to reduce the entrance fee to five gulden, there

was a terrible uproar. Although soup, ragoût, entrées and poultry were to be had very cheaply, paid agents of other entertainers interfered and there was a battle royal with the waiters. The frightened public—4000 panic stricken persons—stormed the cloak room, and the dance festival concluded with a wild orgy of thefts in which furs and silk cloaks disappeared. As some of the guests at the ball had been wearing dominoes and masks it was very difficult for the police to follow up the unsatisfactory descriptions which the victims were able to give of the thieves. The next day Dr. Wolffsohn sent a polite apology to the papers and promised the victims of the robberies full compensation for their loss. The consequence of this was that the following Sunday 6000 people came instead of 4000.

The Hessian conductor Reichardt who was in Vienna that winter, made some very interesting observations on the presumed lucrativeness of this undertaking. Characteristically he calls it a "fantastic monster of splendor and variety," an "imposing, magical thing." And with worried appreciation he adds "only such a great and rich city of general prosperity" could have produced anything of the kind and could afford to keep it up . . . But what if prosperity should cease? Reichardt, who was fascinated by the problem, made a point of keeping watch on the popular, cheap days when people from the surrounding country, peasants from lower Austria with top-boots and round hats, streamed into the fashionable Palace. Sometimes the money was to be made up by numbers. Whole families from the country might be observed, even little children, and we may be sure that on such occasions Wolffsohn issued combined tickets and refunded journey money.

On February 15, 1809, Reichardt writes to his Leipzig paper, "The love of dancing here is now intensified to the point of becoming dance mania." He could not understand how young and old could possibly survive the daily balls, why it was that they were not literally destroyed by them. In nearly all bourgeois houses

dancing was almost the sole subject of conversation. In particular, he heard the festivities of the Apollo balls spoken of as "evenings which must not be missed." Everybody, he reports, rushes to the entertainments with incomprehensible rashness, lightly clothed despite snow and sharp winds. Reichardt reckoned that the number of waltzers in Vienna on a single evening—including, besides the Apollo Palace, the greater and the smaller Redoutensaal and the other resorts—amounted to about 50,000 people. As at the beginning of the century Vienna had only 200,000 inhabitants, every fourth person was to be found in a ballroom.

For many that carnival of 1809 was the last time that they were able to dance with uninjured limbs. In the summer, Napoleon inaugurated a terrible war. It was a veritable dance of death, worse than in the years 1794, 1799, and 1805. Corpses floated down the Danube from Bavaria and northern Austria. In the market place of Ebelsberg the Emperor Napoleon, as chronicled in the *Memoirs*, fainted when he found there a regiment of hunters burnt and torn, in a blackened heap like one immense corpse. In trembling anxiety the whole world watched the decisive war on the Danube. Would the world conqueror, when for the third time he conducted his army into the heart of Austria, now wipe the ancient Imperial State from the face of the earth? But he was defeated at Aspern and immediately afterwards was victorious at Wagram. On October 20th the new peace was ratified which allowed Austria to continue her existence.

On the 22nd of October the Apollo rooms opened with a glittering ball, and two days later Stüwer, the famous firework artist, set up his most magnificent fireworks in the Prater. The Viennese had no desire to perish. These people's frenzied instinct to live never let them down; if it threatened to forsake them it was whipped up by entertainers like Stüwer, Sigmund Wolffsohn and Scherzer.

And then the diplomats of France and of Austria executed their mutual *grand coup*. Four wars had not been able to resolve the rivalries between the two states, so now they resorted to the expedient of a royal alliance. The Emperor Napoleon asked for the hand in marriage of the eldest daughter of the Emperor Franz. This was an extra excuse for dancing. And when Alexandre Berthier, Napoleon's chief of staff and at that time the Duke of Neufchatel, came to Vienna to woo the bride for his master, the Emperor Franz himself together with Marie Louise conducted him to Wolffsohn's dance palace. The Frenchman was to open his eyes!

On this occasion Wolffsohn was at length presented to the Emperor. Attended by a hundred servants in livery he awaited His Majesty. The Emperor Franz spoke to him graciously and in popular style as was his wont, "Aren't you the man who makes the surgical instruments for my brave soldiers? How can you ever find the time to supervise such an immense establishment?"

"Yes, your Majesty," replied Wolffsohn, "I have to make time for it."

"Listen," said the Emperor jovially, "then you must certainly get up early. But never mind, I have to get up early every day too."

Having said this, he passed on with Marie Louise and his amazed guest Berthier through the five immense halls, the thirty-one smaller halls, and the thirteen kitchens of the house . . .

This inspection of the Apollo Palace—till then Wolffsohn's greatest triumph—took place in March, 1810. But then came unhappier times for the financiers and speculators in spite of Napoleon's marriage to a daughter of the Austrian Imperial family. The expenses of the lost wars had exhausted the monetary resources of the Austrian territories. Till the year 1811 it had been possible to maintain the currency at its level. But then there came a sudden devaluation of the gulden, which sank to one-fifth of its value. It was Count Wallis, the Minister of Finance, whose ill-starred decree

gave five gulden the value of one. An amusement establishment so expensively run as Wolffsohn's Apollo Palace was bound to be ruined by this. Wolffsohn could not save himself. He went into bankruptcy, and in 1812 there was a forced sale not of the house, but of its contents. The whole of Vienna, we may read in the *Eipeldauer*, wanted to have souvenirs of the Apollo Hall; even napkins and tablecloths were bought for "sinfully large sums of money. You cannot enter any elegant house without coming upon easy chairs or tables, candelabras and chandeliers, or some china ornament acquired from the Apollo Hall. Herr Wolffsohn can truly say that his furniture has gone out into the whole world. I myself went there with a friend to enjoy the fun of seeing our ladies offering the goods for sale . . ." There was no fun in all this for Wolffsohn. He continued to own the establishment, but he never recovered from bankruptcy. He was obliged to carry on with his undertaking although he had lost all desire to do so. He failed in various attempts to divide the enormous conglomeration of buildings up into lots and use them for something else. Not even the hothouse atmosphere of the Vienna Congress, soon to bring forth giant blooms of apparent prosperity in the Imperial city, was able to revive the Apollo Palace. In 1819 it was taken over by Johann Baptist Höfelmayr, a pastrycook whom the Congress had enriched. Very much later at the age of eighty-five, Wolffsohn died as a pensioner of the city of Vienna.

He is important because his career marks the first of the triumphs of industry over music that set in with the entrepreneurs of the nineteenth century. Anyone who owns a dance hall owns its public too and can dictate to conductors and composers. As in the eighteenth century a reigning prince had his own musician who was obliged to obey the royal orders, so in the nineteenth century were musicians at the beck and call of the owners of great

amusement undertakings. It is such figures as these that help to make the life of Strauss more easily understood.

### THE VIENNA CONGRESS

"Anyone with a feeling of rhythm who enters a ballroom will at once be struck by the exaggerated tempo of the polonaises and waltzes . . . I do not know why this spirit of super-haste and extreme tension is becoming so general both in dancing and music. The wild whirling and hopping that may be observed most certainly does not attain to the character of the waltz, but rather to the characters of our men and women." Thus the plaint of Anton Vieth, a professor of mathematics, in his *Encyclopedia of Physical Exercise*. He was possibly unable to diagnose the reason for the currents swirling around him, but we of the present day know exactly how they came into existence. The terrific speed mentioned by Vieth was the mainstay of the period. The age itself would have collapsed if its phenomena had been forced to come to a standstill. The Napoleonic era had to be a whirl or nothing.

Typical of the Napoleonic masses was their rapid formation and equally typical their stormy progression. The Empire that gave such a violent impetus to industry only lasted for eleven years. Whatever was done in its name felt the need of haste, rose rapidly and collapsed as swiftly.

During the five months that the victorious States were in Congress in Vienna, the flame of life of the period leapt up for the last time and then went out abruptly. More than 100,000 visitors assembled in the capital of his enemies to celebrate Napoleon's downfall. Banquets, military parades, popular festivities succeeded each other with breathless rapidity. Immense orders for luxury articles of all kinds were placed. For a military festival in the Prater (October, 1814), at which the Battle of Leipzig was

celebrated, the entire garrison was fitted out with new uniforms. Business in fancy-goods, cloths, embroideries, leather and food-stuffs rose to a fantastic height. On the other hand, the presence of such large numbers of emperors, kings and courtiers sent prices rocketing. This prevented the common man from profiting by the atmosphere of victory.

As to the emperors, kings and princes themselves, when they were not seated at a table dividing up the map of Europe according to their good pleasure, they were dancing. It almost seemed as if they did nothing but dance. But, curiously enough, it did not dance in the pre-revolutionary mode which it was trying to re-introduce. The Congress of 1815 which wanted to eliminate from history both Napoleon and the French Revolution, took over the new dance of the *grande bourgeoisie* as its own form of social expression. The Congress dances, but it dances the waltz. All the privileges the people had won for themselves since 1789 were to be taken away from them; but, before they were taken away, the people were to gaze on the façade of a democracy without class distinctions. The bourgeois was delighted and astonished. A few pictures may illustrate this.

The King of Bavaria, Maximilian Josef, with other distinguished gentlemen, is partaking of a meal at a public festival in the Augarten. He has no money with him; the waiter engaged by Ignaz Jahn, the proprietor of the restaurant, stands by his side with the bill for such a long time that everybody around begins to laugh. The Czar and the King of Denmark are elbowed just as nonchalantly by the guests at the ball in the Apollo Palace as if they were members of the *bourgeoisie*. Long-legged Frederick William of Prussia, known at his Court in Berlin as pathologically shy, has his left arm round the shoulders of a Russian adventurer. The adventurer—his name is Zibin—is short of stature, and so they wander through the hall like Goliath and David. All kinds

of people mingle with each other, have their intrigues, dance, chatter, eat. Journalists are present; reigning princes of the victorious States; political emissaries; bourgeois purveyors of army supplies; Napoleon's spies, including his stepson Eugen who has already made friends with the Russian Emperor; Arnstein, Eskeles, Pereira, the new Jewish aristocrats of finance; Liechtenstein, Auersperg, Lobkowitz, Colloredo, Esterhazy, Kinsky and Zichy, the great old families of Austria and Hungary—all these are assembled. Shyly the minuet of the eighteenth century raises its head again, the minuet with its delicate distinctions, the cool, the passionless dance. And then, to everyone's amazement it is seen that nobody knows how to dance it. "How terribly sad," says Zibin to Count Witt. The Count de la Garde declares that *he* still remembers the minuet, the beautiful dance handed down by tradition. He approaches one of the young Princesses of Hesse and asks for her assistance in convincing the doubters that the *minuet à la cour* is not irrecoverably lost. She takes his arm; Zibin, the Russian lends him a hat. Placidly and as accurately as possible they go through the classical figures. The pig-tailed gravity of the dance is applauded, but its effect is that of a spectacle removed from life, of a work of art and nothing more.

The news that Napoleon had escaped exploded like a bomb-shell at a ball in Metternich's palace on March 7, 1815. "The announcement of this news," writes de la Garde, "struck the party like lightning from a clear sky. Thousands of wax-lights seemed to be extinguished all at once." Countess Bernstorff writes, "Though politicians are accustomed to control themselves, these terrible tidings were written on their faces. Talleyrand showed the deepest, Stewart the most conspicuous marks, and the Czar's pallor shouted what his lips would never have breathed."

The fearful news of the flight from Elba could not be concealed from the guests. In vain the band continued to play; the



dancers shuddered and stood still, gazed at each other, asked each other questions. The four words, "he is in France" were hewn into the frozen scene.

Then the Czar approached Talleyrand: "Didn't I tell you that none of this could last?" The French ambassador bowed without answering.

The King of Prussia signed to Wellington and together they made a dejected exit from the ballroom. They were followed by the Russian Emperor, the Austrian Emperor and Metternich. Only a few groups remained behind, conversing in anxious whispers . . . The thunder from a thousand fiery throats, the terrible war-dance of Waterloo, inscribed the Coda to that ball in Metternich's Palace in Vienna. Napoleon, crushed by England, disappeared to St. Helena. The episode of the Hundred Days passed. The Empire period was over.

#### CALM

Hardly had the last cannon shot of the Napoleonic era ceased to reverberate when a matchless tranquility descended on Vienna. Life turned inwards. Reflectiveness and modesty grew up like tiny blossoms by the carriage ruts graven into the earth by the passage of high politics.

All the arts were toned down. Painters avoided ostentatious subjects. In Vienna, Moritz von Schwind painted the Spring, or ancient German sagas softened by idyllic lighting. A new mode in furnishing, quite unsentimental, came from England and reminded the Viennese petite bourgeoisie that they had no more money. But it reminded them too that one can be happy with very little, if a garden, however tiny, is visible from one's room, particularly if that room is papered with sunshine. "To attain much by means of little, this was his watchword in art and life,"

was said of Moritz von Schwind by his pupil Eduard Ille. The fundamental idea underlying the Biedermeier style—"what is beautiful is simple, what is simple is cheap"—gave birth to new rooms; window curtains were made of cotton, of the same material as women's dresses. Wood was shown in its natural coloring. Green, pink, and yellow hues penetrated from the gardens into the apartments and flooded human hearts with light, grace and comfort. There was no more hankering after the "great things" for which so much blood had been shed.

That was Franz Schubert's world and the world of his friends; they sought their modest pleasures in wine, with women, and in moonlight nights. Round as a well, the city of Vienna encircled Schubert's never-ceasing compositions. The springs of melody within him were inexhaustible. If something had been left unformulated yesterday, or there was an excess of inspiration from the day before, this would be caught up in a song today. Bushes, trees, and the clouds looking down on the reservoir which was Schubert, poured their moisture into his great talent and were the sources of his daily productions. A whole city was nourished by Franz Schubert, and in imbibing what he produced granted him the right to his own life. Never has there been a more active circulation between the respective atmospheres of a genius and his native city.

One spring day in April, 1819, three young men stood among the strolling crowds in the Prater, playing the violin. They were three real musicians. The Viennese understand musical technique, and passers-by noticed at once that these three were youthful artists, not ordinary "fiddle-scrappers" playing for alms. The three lads knew what they were about; they were Josef Lanner, the son of a glove manufacturer from St. Ulrich, and the two brothers Drahanek, who, as the name suggests, were Czechs, and therefore

particularly good with the bow. When they finished playing, the younger Drahanek went round with a plate.

Did they collect much? Not very much money was to be had here, but the Sunday visitors in the garden of Jünglings Kaffeehaus had something to spare for good music. In the interval, a fifteen-year-old guest went up to Josef Lanner. Lanner was nineteen, slim and fair-haired, and the leader of the musical trio. The lad who accosted him was not less tall, but lean and delicate; he had raven-black hair like a southerner. Actually, they were already acquainted. Fifteen-year-old Johann Strauss and Josef Lanner had played together the year before under Pamer in the Goldene Birne and had probably played waltzes together in the Sperl. Soon after, however, young Lanner had run away from his eternally drunken chief, and had started his trio with the brothers Drahanek. And then Johann Strauss had had enough of it too. He had heard of Lanner's successes, sought and found him in the Prater, and so the trio blossomed into a quartet.

Thereafter began a strange life, lighthearted, intense, gay and yet modest. The four wanted to do nothing but make music. What they earned on any one day they spent before the next. It was quite certain that they would never amass money like Hummel the virtuoso, the composer of the music for the Apollo Palace, who left behind him diamonds and ten dozen gold watches. Trees do not retain their leaves—when Autumn comes they shed them. In the same way gulden and kreuzer deserted Josef Lanner and Johann Strauss. They never gave a thought to saving and amassing money.

Neither of them, however, was a "bohémian," they were merely young and thoughtless. Martin Lanner, Josef's father, was a glove-maker. In other words, he followed a calling which was on the boundary dividing vital necessities from luxury wares. It is possi-

ble to live without gloves; but on the other hand, the mere fact of possessing gloves does not make a man either an aristocrat or an adventurer. Honest citizens wore gloves in old Vienna. The son of glove-maker Lanner, and the son of the ale-house keeper Strauss remained honest citizens of old Vienna in spite of all their pranks.

And pranks of all kinds they certainly played—like a couple of buffoons. Almost daily they provided the city of Vienna with a wild-flower bouquet of practical jokes—a form of possibly not unintentional propaganda for their quartet. In the Wällisches Bierhaus, in the Café Rebhuhn or in the Kettenbrückensaal they would set the whole place by the ears. At that time the “blond head” and the “nigger head” were living together in one room at 18, Windmühlgasse. They were in debt, but they were very cunning. Whenever the bailiff came and asked for Lanner, Strauss would open the door and assure him that Josef Lanner possessed nothing at all. If on the other hand, the bailiff asked for Strauss, Lanner would do him the same service. As a rule on those occasions, one of the two would be lying on the bed, half stifled with mirth. By August, 1821, the musical twins had come down to one white shirt between the two of them. With much laughter they arranged to wear it on alternate days. When they went out onto the street together, one of them was obliged to button his coat up to the neck and turn up his collar, however burningly the sun’s rays might be beating down on him.

Not far from one of the inns where Lanner and Strauss were accustomed to play, there was a tobacco shop, next to the door of which crouched the figure of a Turk smoking his pipe. It was made of plaster of Paris and was a well-known Viennese shop sign. The tranquil Pasha became the butt of Lanner’s high spirits. Together with Strauss he tied a cord round the body of the statue

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and bound the other end of the cord round the wheel of a waiting horse-cab. The coachman was asleep. It was two o'clock at night when the two youths, slightly intoxicated, took their seats in the cab. The driver woke up and urged on his horses, cracking his whip. The horses refused and the cab did not move an inch. The coachman whipped up the horses, and all of a sudden they were off in a gallop as if the devil were behind them. The sedentary Turk was torn from his seat and dragged along with a thunderous racket. He came apart with such violence that large pieces of his corpse clattered against houses and window panes. Plaster of Paris, stone, glass splinters. Had war broken out? Fifty Viennese house-porters, startled out of their dreams, rushed cursing into the streets, but the trap raced on like the wild hunt in the *Freischütz*, and all that was left for the raging porters to do was to clear away the débris from the pavement the next morning . . . "That must have been those two young devils, Lanner and Strauss," said all Vienna.

The two were so popular that they decided to increase their numbers. Lanner founded an orchestra consisting of twelve musicians, to play in the larger inns for which a quartet would not suffice. Johann Strauss became his first violin and the leader of the orchestra. In the Roter Hahn where Lanner now played, good society was represented by a number of officers of the Hungarian bodyguard. These were people who from their attendance at court were acquainted with Beethoven and Mozart, who might perhaps demand something that differed from ordinary light music. The ambitions of the orchestra increased with their socially prominent patrons. True, the chief and his orchestra leader were very ignorant; they had learnt neither composition nor orchestration, and of harmony they knew only as much as any layman who is thoroughly acquainted with his violin. But they had good taste and could distinguish faultlessly between the genuine and the

spurious. They realized that they had been playing worthless music for years. Was it really necessary for light music to be so shallow, so banal in its technique, so devoid of ideas? The great, the roaring Vienna Congress which should have produced bold, humorous, splendid music had brought forth just nothing at all. How strange that was. And as to the waltz music in three-quarter time that swam out over the parquet flooring, it was actually boring. Hardly anything but rhythm, one accentuated and two unaccentuated notes—umtata—who could be expected to enjoy it? Schiedermaier, Hofrichter, Preisinger, Gyrowetz, Eybler, Diabelli—none of them had any ideas left.

All the great men in music have played their part in the dances of their period. What glorious minuets were written by Gluck, Rameau and Lully, Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven. Why had no real genius ever bothered about the waltz? Was it not worth it? Surely that could not be the reason, when the whole world danced the waltz and would not hear of dancing anything else. Schubert of course, as Lanner well knew, had written very beautiful, humorous and touching waltzes. Schubert's waltzes are like sparks of his genius, but strangely enough they are impermanent. They are too short and are extinguished too quickly, leaving behind more scent than sound. Are they too beautiful to be danced to? No. But Schubert's music is so closely interwoven with the web of our own souls that a minute taste of it leaves us dissatisfied.

To dance these dances is to degrade them. Amazement at their harmony—the swift change from major to minor and back again to major, sometimes in a single bar—appeals more to our imagination than to the leg-muscles of the dancer. It is not that it is impossible to dance these daring innovations, these suspended notes and changes of key; but their coolness, their deep solemnity makes them unsuitable. Schubert's chords are melancholy; his heartburnings, his rippling sixths, his gravity, his very greatness,

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wrapped up though they are in his inimitable gaiety, are too heavy a compound for the dance . . .\*

But surely (this is Lanner again) it should be possible to dance to good lively music which reflects everything that we love, which reminds us of wine, of clouds, of our gentle Vienna. Tentatively he stroked his violin—*pianissimo*. A memory of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony quivered in the air. It was that passage of the *Dorfmusik* which is popular and yet such consummate art:



And while Johann Strauss made love to the beautiful daughter of the Roter Hahn, the dark-eyed Anna Streim, Lanner was writing his first waltzes.

\*We should have a wrong conception of the *Schubertiaden* (Schubert festivities) instituted in honor of Schubert by his friends if we were to imagine that they were dance festivities. The entertainment was provided by Schubert at the piano, accompanying the singer Michael Vogl in Schubert's own songs. Then there was eating and drinking and finally Schubert would play some dance music for his friends and their partners. But Schubert himself could not dance and this may possibly be the real explanation of the non-danceable quality of his waltzes. Schubert was shy. To dream of women over a glass of wine was more to his taste than to embrace them in the dance.

## 3

## Lanner and Strauss

*Oh, Strauss and Lanner, on your wandering missions as chosen prophets of the god of dancing, your wondrous fiddling as of true magicians enfolds both young and old in dreams entrancing. The ball room is a temple full of motion, we tread a lovely measure, bells are ringing; and now the fiddles sound like girlish singing, while base-tones from the pulpit speak devotion.*

KARL BECK

## WEBER AND THE DANCE

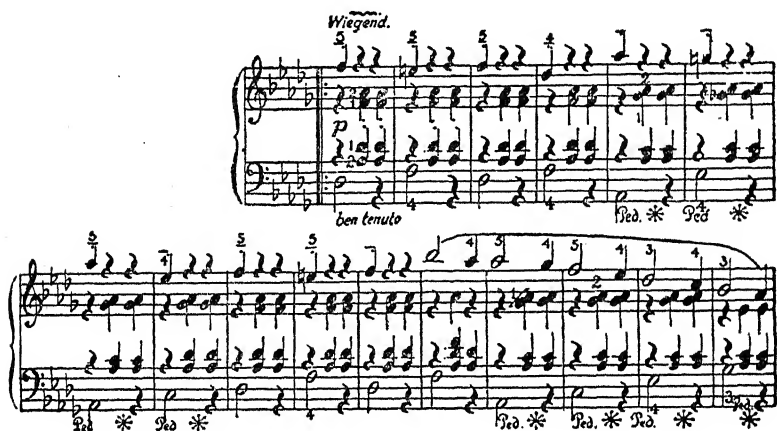
Apart from Franz Schubert, only one genius had been connected with the waltz at the epoch now under consideration. This was Karl Maria von Weber in Dresden.

In the summer of 1819, he wrote his *Invitation to the Dance*. In the midst of his work on *Freischütz*, the work that completely revolutionized German opera, he wrote this concert rondo for the piano, a symphonic composition that was as revolutionary as his opera. Weber's biographer asserts—wrongly—that Weber's *allegro con fuoco* brought a new element into dancing. No, it was a long time since the solemn dance had been in vogue. Hummel's *Apollo Waltz*, for example, had swift rhythms. What was new in Weber's



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*Invitation* was that it appeared to be not merely a dance, but a programmatic description of persons dancing. Weber's summons to the ballroom is still as magnetic as it was a century ago. According to the mood of the dancers, the melody now vaults stormily on high, now sways in dulcet tones; now it grows *brillante ma gracioso*, then *passionato, lusingando, scherzando*. Weber's music reveals the souls of the dancers, which no dance music had done before. Sentiment reigns, not the dance melody, and the changing emotions are clearly reflected in the score. Here are dreams, there is a lullaby, here are coquetry, teeming passion and melancholy. A whole scale of feeling in a question, evasion in the answer, contact with the soul of the other person, the Yes, the Why, the semi-No, the For-Ever-Thine lasting for several bars, all the lyrical emotions and barely measurable fluctuations experienced by thousands of people in a ballroom are caught and imparted in this work of genius. Moreover it includes a declaration of love, a wooing and a social picture; the gentleman in the silken waistcoat and the dark blue dress coat and the beribboned lady with monster sleeves. An aura of lavender and melted candle-wax hovers round the dancers.



Weber composed this amazing piece of work with his left hand as it were, while with the right he was building up *Freischütz*, that great, green woodland prospect. With his wind instruments he poured moonlight over sylvan glades and drives shuddering violoncellos through ghostly gorges. He gave spiritual life to mysterious shapes in sandstone, to grimacing fog drifts, superstitious peasantry and stiffnecked hunters; even timber had a soul which was wafted abroad in the strains of the flute. Lime trees gave out their scent in the night, pine-trees their stark odors, and midnight winds drove through the darkness. When in July, 1819, Weber produced his pianoforte *Invitation* in the midst of his work on *Freischütz*, it seemed as if he did it for recreation.

Nowhere was the *Invitation to the Waltz* so well understood as in Vienna. Technically speaking, it meant that Vienna adopted the innovation of the Prelude and the Coda. But above all it meant that the soul, the spirit with its everlasting changes was allowed to creep into the dance. A thousand moods were possible, but not till then had they been expressed in dance music.

#### COMPANIONS OF THE WALTZ

Inspired by the symphonic introduction he had learnt from Weber, Lanner began his task of raising the waltz from its position as a mere dance accompaniment to a higher level. His attempts were still hesitant, but full of charm. Eduard Hanslick speaks somewhere of Lanner's "violet-scented melodies." With Lanner the romantic epoch began for the waltz, and the flower-gardens and green leaves of Spring penetrated into the ballroom. Lanner's compositions are unsophisticated and unpretentious, but his waltzes could no more be commonplace than could a flower.\*

\*The waltz of which a fragment is given here, is the famous *Schönbrunner*; it recalls the D-flat major motif from Weber's *Invitation to the Waltz*. And yet what an illuminating difference there is in the rhythmic structure. Weber brings out the motif as a cascade of broad, expressive dactyls, while with Lanner it trips anapaestically. It is as if Biedermeier were to look round in the park of Schönbrunn for traces of rococo nymphs.

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Waltzes had been incredibly primitive up to that time, and their wooden repetitions were almost nauseating. Eight short-winded bars, and that was all. The bad habit of repeating the principal theme five tones higher had dominated the waltz till then. This has been drastically called "Cobbler's Patch," from the cobbler's custom of covering up a hole by putting a patch on it. That the older form of the waltz was almost identical with the Cobbler's Patch is proved by Lenau's poem *Styrian Dance*. In it he makes a wanderer consider the question whether the life we live here will be repeated in heaven, and his conclusion is:

And yet I can't believe it,  
 'Tis true that our musicians  
 Repeat their Waltz Part One  
 In slightly different key  
 On fiddles and on zither  
 And calls this Waltz Part Two.  
 But does the Master-Fiddler  
 Playing the Firmament  
 While stars perform their dances,  
 Take our own earthly life,  
 When once He's played it over  
 And play it all again  
 Just higher by one fifth?



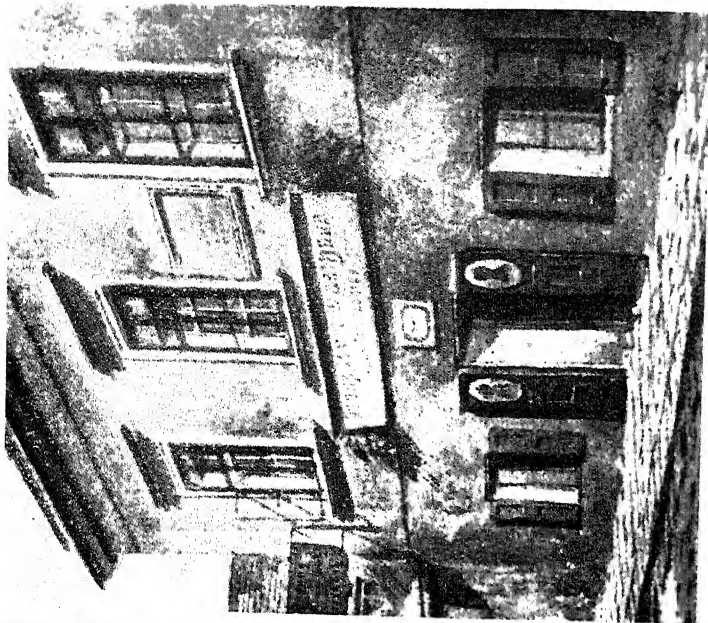
THE CARMAGNOLE



FÊTE DE LA LIBERTÉ  
Amsterdam 1795



ANNA STRAUSS-STREIM



THE HOUSE IN THE FLOSSGASSE

Lanner was not so banal as to construct his waltzes in this way. He had plenty of ideas, which came to him wherever he went. Unlike Strauss he remained suburban the whole of his life, and the harmony of his waltz compositions frequently resembles that of popular songs. As a violinist Lanner was not sensual but sentimental, and that alone made him the idol of the Viennese. His domain was that of tears or at least a quick change-over from laughter to tears; this was typical of the Viennese whose gaiety was always close to tears. As in the German language the word *lächeln*, to smile, is a diminutive *lachen*, to laugh, so the Viennese has his diminutive *weinen* from *weinen*, to cry.

When later Ole Bull (the great Norwegian violinist) came to Vienna, the audience at his concert was struck by the similarity of his bowing to Lanner's. Wasielowski tells us that Bull had "a different arrangement from the ordinary on his violin; its unique construction with a very low bridge favored polyphonic playing, though this was to the detriment of the full volume and energy of the tone." The touching quality of Lanner's playing was attained by his soft polyphony, his art in manipulating the "sobbing third," while the greatness of Strauss as a violinist lay in his abrupt *rubati*, in the power of his sensual bowing, which commanded where Lanner only flattered. As in their external appearance the fair man and the black haired man were complementary to each other, so also were their temperaments; one was soulful, the other hot-headed.

Lanner was far luckier than most greater musicians; hardly had he begun to compose when he was pursued by publishers. The economic basis of dance music is here crassly demonstrated. Dance music is utilitarian music. There is no risk in printing music which is needed everywhere. Lanner's first publisher was Diabelli—a name which has become immortal because Beethoven did not dis-

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dain to write thirty-three variations on a musical idea of his. This same Anton Diabelli published Lanner's first sixteen waltzes. These for the most part were still *Ländler*. Opus 7 was the first that was influenced by Weber; it even included a passage from the *Invitation to the Waltz*. Diabelli's successor as Lanner's publisher was old Tobias Haslinger, a scurrilous, active little man who wore enormous collars. He was delighted to be able to snatch the popular Lanner away from his rival. He paid better than Diabelli.

Lanner was hardly able to comply with all the offers made him by Viennese entertainment establishments. He decided to divide his orchestra and entrusted Strauss with the management of one half. This had important consequences, as it stimulated rival ambitions.

Lanner was pious. In the simplicity and purity of his heart he never doubted that an idea would come to him if he needed it to fulfil a promise. On the margin of his compositions he always wrote "With God: Josef Lanner." His self-confidence in this direction was so great that it was no rare thing for him to announce a waltz for the evening no note of which had been written in the morning. When this happened, the whole orchestra would usually assemble in the composer's apartment. As soon as the lovable, easy-going man had finished one part of the music, his staff would arrange it for the instruments. Simultaneously the copyists would get the work. His room was like a small factory. Meanwhile the miracle of inspiration was repeated again and again in the composer's head; new themes occurred to him and were incorporated. Two hours later the composition was finished, was rehearsed and in the evening it was played to its audience. "Lanner the sanguine, the lighthearted, hardly ever produced in any other way," writes Johann Strauss the Younger. "Then one day it happened that he felt ill and incapable of work . . . Thereupon he sent the perfectly

natural message to my father: Strauss, see if you can think of something." And so it was done. In the evening, the orchestra played Strauss Opus 1, though at the time it was credited to Lanner. Lanner, immeasurably good-natured as he was, would certainly have had no objection if Strauss had made himself known as the composer. But the fact that this was not done probably gave Strauss his first uncomfortable feeling. The same thing happened several times, as the need for it increased; more dances were being needed than Lanner could produce.

After years of a harmonious friendship, the first discord appeared in the Autumn of 1825. Overtired and overstrained nerves led to a comical contretemps in the large ballroom Zum Bock. After a long discussion, Lanner had consented to allow Strauss, who wanted to resign, to go his own way. It was nearly two o'clock in the morning and most of the public had already left the ballroom, when Lanner mounted the platform and made a farewell speech to Strauss. In his annoyance he had perhaps drunk too much; in any case, wine-induced truth found its way into the farewell hymn of praise and the speech became more and more insulting. Strauss was shy, but he had a hot temper. And all of a sudden they came to blows. Their weapons were their fiddle-bows. The people nearest to them tore them apart, but the rest were amused by the tumult and amid cuffs and laughter entered the fray, some on the side of Lanner, others for Strauss. Then the musicians joined in and the instruments suffered. A bass-viol was trampled to pieces and the entrails of a violoncello spilled out of its burst middle. Flutes and clarinets accustomed to mutual harmony, suddenly turned against each other, wood was splintered and the great mirror, the pride of the establishment, succumbed to the attack of a blindly hurled chair. That brought the gentlemen to their senses, as it cost a great deal of money. Why should they



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smash up everything even if they did not love one another any more?

All the same, Strauss and Lanner did love one another. They were so ashamed of themselves that for years they avoided meeting. When Lanner returned home in a very emotional state after the fracas in the "Bock" he composed Opus 19, the famous *Trennungswalzer* (Separation Waltz) to celebrate his separation from Strauss, but the word *lament* (Klage) occurs in its heading.

### THE LEGEND OF A FAMILY

Economic considerations induced Strauss to desert his friend's orchestra. Fourteen of Lanner's best musicians left him at the same time. Strauss employed them from then on, no longer as Lanner's representative, but in his own person. He wished to marry, he had to marry. His fiancée Anna Streim, the daughter of the landlord of the Roter Hahn, was expecting a child.

What was she like, this Anna Streim? The family portrait of her that has come down to us reveals a curious facial structure. Her eyes are set far back in her head and have strikingly long lids; this is characteristic of the races which are obliged to protect themselves against too much sunshine. The determining feature of the face is the mouth, with its curled upper lip with something soothing and tender about it. The dominant impression is maternal, full of feeling, and at the same time very naive.

According to the family legend, this daughter of the innkeeper Streim was the grandchild of a Spanish grandee. Eduard Strauss, the third son of Johann Strauss and Anna Streim, gives us, in his *Memoirs*, the detailed fable of his mother's descent. The grandee (his name is unknown) was exceedingly wealthy. He was one of the opponents of the Court and one day about the middle of the eighteenth century he sent a challenge to the Crown Prince and

killed him in a duel, whereupon he had to flee for his life. He had no time to sell his great estates and had very little money. Hiding by day and traveling by night, the grandee with his wife and five children escaped without hindrance to France, traveled via Germany to Vienna and came to the home of a friend, Duke Albert of Sachsen-Teschen, the husband of the Arch-Duchess Christine. The Duke promised to help on condition that the Spaniard conceal his rank. Duke Albert was too much indebted to the Spanish Court to be able officially to harbor a man who had killed the Spanish Prince.

The grandee, whose estates had meanwhile been confiscated by the Spanish state, saw no other way of escape. He changed his high-sounding title into a simple bourgeois name and from then on called himself Rober. As Rober he sought manual work and became a cook at the Court of Duke Albert von Sachsen-Teschen. The original name was to be entirely wiped out; Rober's sons kept the secret with such strict loyalty that not even their sisters, who were then small children, ever heard the aristocratic name which was really their own.

The princely cook and his wife very soon died, crushed by sorrow. Their five children led a laborious life. One son and one daughter died young. Another son, Michael, became a painter in the service of Prince Liechtenstein. Of the two remaining daughters, the younger, whose name was Maria Anna, married Josef Streim, who had been a coachman in the Esterhazy stables. Not till after his marriage did he buy the Roter Hahn. It was he who became Strauss' father-in-law.

Of the two daughters that Maria Anna bore her husband, Anna Streim was the prettier. Not only had she inherited the Spanish features of her grandparents, but she was an excellent performer on the guitar. This instrument was a mysterious family heirloom,

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the only thing that her mother had brought with her out of all her wealth.

Thus the Strauss legend. Is the story true? In that form it is not very likely.

To begin with, if a Crown Prince, heir to the proud Spanish throne, had been killed, surely the fact would have been known outside the whispered tradition of an emigrant family? But in the history of Spain there is no mention of the killing of a Crown Prince about the year 1770.

The second improbability is the rôle played by Duke Albert of Teschen. That prince and diplomat was the brother-in-law of the Emperor Josef. He was an Austrian Field-Marshal and later the Emperor's representative as Governor of Brussels, later still the German Imperial Marshal in the war against revolutionary France. After the death of his wife, who was a daughter of Maria Theresa, he retired from politics and the service of the Austrian State. One of the greatest collectors and patrons of art, he left the "Albertina" to the city of Vienna. It is quite impossible to credit this prince, who was well known in the whole of Europe, with having given shelter to a nobleman on such humiliating conditions. Either Duke Albert was prepared to protect the fugitive duelist with all the power which he represented and treat him according to his rank, or the grandee was never a grandee.

But who was this Rober then, the great-grandfather of Johann Strauss' children? The name tells us nothing. It has something daring about it, as if it were that of a robber captain. The word *robur* in Latin means strength; the root "rob" in the Romance language indicates something "robbed," something "obtained as booty." The riddle will never be solved. But Ernst Decsey, the Strauss biographer, is on the right path when he describes the legend as a psychological necessity. The fabulous Rober was perhaps a member of the roving peoples, one who traveled in a green

wagon, a gypsy who desired to settle down. The distance upward from a traveling gypsy to a nobleman's cook is at least as far as the distance downward from a Spanish grandee to a cook. Rober was probably forced to defend his strange appearance, his yellow brown skin, and his dark eyes against the servants of the Duke, and so he invented the legend that he himself was a nobleman, but had been obliged to discard his rank. However untrue this tradition may be, there is something pathetic about the story built up around the memory of a home lost in early years. Whether that home was Madrid, or whether it was in the bushes at the mouth of the Rhone where so many gypsies live; or whether it was on the prairies of Roumania or Hungary and resounded to the tones of the guitar, in any case, it is certainly possible that Anna Streim was descended from that mysterious people that was idolized by such great musicians as Verdi and Liszt. From the standpoint of music, gypsies are no less valuable than Spaniards and after all that is the main thing.

When Johann Strauss married Anna Streim, two types were united which resembled each other more than is desirable. Johann Strauss too had features which contrasted with those of the typical Viennese. With his coal-black hair, his pale face and his burning eyes, he did not look like a "native." Broad, jovial, good-natured humor, such as Lanner possessed, was quite alien to Strauss. He was very excitable, very obstinate and very reserved. He too had the gypsy temperament. He and Anna looked as if they were brother and sister. They had a number of children, but their marriage was not happy. People looking at the three world-famous Strauss sons—Johann (1825), Josef (1827), Eduard (1835)—as babies in their cots were often amazed and would burst out laughing at the little blackamoors that had been born in the heart of Europe.

## THE STRAUSS-LANNER FEUD

Strauss became a father at the age of twenty-one. He now had to provide for a family, write waltzes and conduct, was expected to be in several places at once, give orders to an orchestra, be awake at night and sleep by day, if indeed there was any time over for him to sleep at all. Now was the time to show whether he could really compete with Lanner as a composer and as a conductor. Lanner was the more popular, as his music "flattered Viennese hearts," while Strauss "gave orders to the dancers' feet."

Strauss had a strong will and he set himself the task of conquering both the hearts and the feet; he would both flatter and command. The gentle Biedermeier colors, the pale intimate beauties of Moritz von Schwind and Gauermaun are not lacking in Strauss' music, but the commanding note is always present.

Strauss was not gentle by nature, but he was capable of producing very soft colorings in his music. His very first composition was named *Täuberl Waltzer* after the Gasthof zu den Tauben for which it was composed. Vienna is the city of pigeons, more so than any other city in the world except Venice. Vienna has almost more pigeons than sparrows. They are the protégés of the people—and something of their cooing and nodding, tripping, billing and preening, is to be found in Johann Strauss' first waltz. It was orchestrated for three violins, one flute, two clarinets, two horns, one trumpet, two drums and one double-bass. Surprisingly enough, this shows that in consequence of his separation from Lanner Strauss had neither a viola nor a violoncello, but he was soon to find these. His music indeed is mainly built up on string quartets. All his life he was a first violin; his ideas and little turns of melody were children of the fiddle. The violin filled in, assimilated and covered up the asperities of the three-quarter time. To us it seems incomprehensible that in the pre-waltz period the *Ländler*

of the eighteenth century was danced to an accompaniment of hautboys and bagpipes. Stamping was appropriate to the blast of these instruments. True soulfulness did not come till the violin brought a *legato*.

Johann Strauss' first waltzes were so successful that he went on writing continuously. Publishers, the public and the proprietors of dance halls snatched his music-sheets away from him before the ink was dry. This threatened to overstrain his powers, and on a later occasion Eduard Hanslick warned him against it: "The narrowest framework and the most inexorable conditions that exist in music today demand from the composer of a waltz that from the first beat he strain his invention to the utmost, then, without making fruitful use of it, throw away the freshly plucked blossom, strive for it again, and once more waste it. Nor does the narrow, strictly compact form of the waltz permit of even the slightest development of a melody; as soon as it has come to a close it disappears without trace, to make way for a second, a third, a fourth, until all five themes have been played through. For one dance five waltzes are needed in addition to the introduction and finale; that means at least five new themes . . . This is inartistic wastefulness, which must soon exhaust even the most talented power of production."

Johann Strauss had some idea of this without being able to ward off the fundamental danger. But instinctively he wished to learn at least how to "preserve the flowers of invention fresh for a longer time"; so he took lessons with Beethoven's friend, the conductor von Seyfried, in composition, thorough-bass and orchestration. He also had theory lessons from Jansa. While composing and giving unsparingly of his best, secretly and with touching zeal he absorbed theoretical knowledge.

Still more courageous than Lanner, he banished the boring symmetry which till then had governed the waltz. Eight bars opening

## JOHANN STRAUSS THE ELDER

phrase, eight bars return phrase; then repetition of the opening phrase and between them two connecting bars. Strauss did away with this, enlarged it to the point of individualistic caprice. Every dance was to have its own individual features, a physiognomy recognizable from afar by its title. What if the tyranny of three-quarter time insisted on eternal sameness and the feet always danced the same steps? Then courage and imagination were needed to disguise the repetition and prevent satiety. People did not always dance with the same partner, and even if they did, no dance was quite like the last, there was bound to be some variation. The music of Johann Strauss places trills at points in the bar where they have a surprising effect; he inserts syncopated passages from great music—music in which dance associations were unthinkable—like little rocks past which the ear is carried as in an eddy. *Pizzicati* and the teasing sounds of the guitar pick at the melody like the beaks of birds before they fly away again; questions are followed by answers and then come fresh questions, just as Weber had taught. One of Strauss' most famous waltzes was called *Mittel gegen den Schlaf*:



It was Johann Strauss' great secret that the dazzling power of his invention never permitted boredom to supervene. What tension there is even in his long introductions; he wrote twenty-three bars alone as introduction to *Das Leben ein Tanz* (Life is a Dance) which later on Liszt was to consider his best work; thirty bars of music precede his *Loreley-Rheinklänge* before the beginning of the waltz itself:

## LANNER AND STRAUSS



The world, his audiences and the publishers continuously demanded new work from him. His store was inexhaustible. When no original theme occurred to him, Strauss had no scruples in turning into waltzes ideas derived from Beethoven, Weber or Meyerbeer. As nowadays jazz has no respect for the works of the great masters, so then the waltz exercised its tyranny regardless of the claims of the highest musical art to inviolability.

Both Strauss and Lanner were exceedingly prolific composers. Originally similar in talent, their separation caused them to develop on different lines. Moreover, each was stimulated by hearing of the successes of the other. Like Strauss, Lanner was in great demand. At one time he conducted in public seven evenings a week as well as at numerous private balls. In 1829 the Emperor fulfilled his highest ambition by appointing him Court Ball Musical Director at the famous Redoutensaal. Later Lanner lost this post again through his extremely uncourtly behavior. It seems that he addressed the Archduchess Sofia in a most improper manner, a thing that the more refined Strauss would never have done.

At heart the former friends grudged each other nothing. But their hangers-on, the scandalmongers and agitators spurred them both to hostilities. All Vienna was divided up into "Straussianer"



and "Lannerianer," followers of the two musicians according to their respective preferences in dance music, some favoring the deeply sentimental-intimate style, others the "demoniac." Press campaigns were fought and although, viewed historically, Strauss remained a victor in the end because as an artist he had the broader mind and the greater courage, he never quite succeeded in converting the "Lannerianer." There was always one set of people who, like Lanner's biographer, adhered to the opinion: "Lanner is the Mozart of dance music. So far no one has attained his level in his own field; though a great many have tried, no one has succeeded in approaching him. Lanner has no rivals, not even Strauss. Lanner is a waltz poet, Strauss is a waltz composer . . ." When Lanner's adherents alleged that he was "superior to his rival Johann Strauss in the technical perfection of his violin playing," this could hardly have been true. The attitudes of mind vied with each other in judging Strauss' and Lanner's violin playing. There was the sentimental attitude which discovered the human voice in Lanner's slow *sforzando*, in his full, sweet tone; and there was the passionate attitude which believed that the Bohemian-Hungarian mission of the violinist was to play for the dance with the greatest possible sensual exuberance. This Strauss could do. And for the rest, he was quite capable of copying Lanner when he liked, while Lanner was incapable of reversing the process.

In 1830, Johann Strauss of the modest beginnings had two hundred musicians under him; a regiment of virtuosi which he could divide up and despatch to several points of attack. As a retort to Lanner's engagement at the Emperor's Redoutensaal, he concluded a six-year contract with the biggest bourgeois establishment of the time. He allowed Johann Scherzer to tie him down to the Sperl; this was the place where as a boy of fourteen he had played

the viola under the drunken conductor Pamer. Now at the age of twenty-six he entered it as a king.

### THE SOLE RULER

Heinrich Laube, the North German author, who came to Vienna in 1833, gives a report of the Sperl as it then was:

"The garden is illuminated by a thousand lamps, all the halls are open. Strauss is directing the dance music. Fire balls are everywhere, the shrubberies are alive with people and crowds are still pouring in from the city . . . It is a very mixed company, but its ingredients are not to be despised . . . Half a night spent at the Sperl when the gardens are in bloom gives the key to Vienna as a pleasure city . . . Under illuminated trees and in open arcades people are seated at innumerable tables eating and drinking, chattering, laughing and listening. In their midst is the orchestra from which come the new waltzes, the bugbear of our learned musicians, the new waltzes that stir the blood like the bite of a tarantula. In the middle of the garden on the orchestra platform there stands the modern hero of Austria, *le Napoléon autrichien*, the musical director, Johann Strauss. The Strauss waltzes are to the Viennese what the Napoleonic victories were to the French, and if only the Viennese possessed cannons, they would erect a Vendôme pillar to him at the Sperl. The father shows him to his child, the Viennese lady shows him to her foreign lover, the host points him out to his guest.

"They are a cheerful sensual people, the Austrians. Napoleon cost his Frenchmen many sons, the Austrians have only paid a few gulden and a few wakeful nights, and their reward is a Strauss (literally ostrich) with colored decoy feathers for the ladies . . .

"I was very curious to see the Austrian Napoleon and it pleased me to find him in the center of the battlefield. He was just fighting

his Austerlitz as we arrived. With his bow he was pointing to the heavens and the violins were acclaiming the rising of the sun.

"There he stood before me, the third of the triumvirate, of which Napoleon is the first and Paganini the second. Like the latter, he was holding the fiddle in his hand and beating time as if possessed, as if hurled by invisible forces . . .

"All eyes were turned to him, it was a moment of worship. You will be asked, I said to myself, the generations of the future will ask: what does he look like, this Johann Strauss? If Napoleon's appearance was classically Roman and calmly antique, if Paganini's was romantic and arresting as moonlight, so that of Maëstro Strauss is African and hot-blooded, crazy from the sun, modern, bold, fidgety, restless, unbeautiful, passionate. These are adjectives from which the reader may make his selection.

"The man is black as a Moor; his hair is curly; his mouth is melodious, energetic, his lip curls, his nose is snub; if his face were not so white he would be the complete king of the Moors from Ethiopia, the complete Balthazar . . . Under Herod, Balthazar came bearing incense with which to capture the senses—and it is the same with Strauss; he, too, exercises the wicked devils from our bodies and he does it with waltzes. That is the modern form, he too sways our senses.

"Typically African too is the way he conducts his dances; his own limbs no longer belong to him when the desert-storm of his waltz is let loose; his fiddle-bow dances with his arms; the tempo animates his feet; the melody waves champagne glasses in his face; the ostrich takes a swift run preliminary to beginning his flight . . . The devil is abroad.

"And the Viennese accept this passionate procedure with unexampled enthusiasm, paying such close attention to their hero and his deeds as it would be well for the German public to pay to some other things. He performed a pot-pourri into which some

of his waltz themes had been interwoven and that enormous mixed public recognized the tiniest Strauss allusions and greeted each waltz rhythm with thunderous cheers.

"The power wielded by the black-haired musician is potentially very dangerous; it is his especial good fortune that no censorship can be exercised over waltz music and the thoughts or emotions it arouses. The strange saying that it is possible to combine in one person a musical genius and a fool is applicable to him. This is not meant as an insult but as a form of congratulation. I do not know what other things besides music Strauss may understand, but I do know that he is a man who could do a great deal of harm if he were to play Rousseau's ideas on his violin. In one single evening the Viennese would subscribe to the entire *contrat social* . . .

"It is a notable fact that Austrian sensuality is neither vulgar nor sinful; it is that of mankind before the fall, before the tree of knowledge brought definition and finesse.

"The motley crowds jostle each other, the girls warm and laughing push their way among the lively youths, their hot breath tickles my nostrils like the perfume of tropical flowers, their arms drag me into the midst of the tumult. No one apologizes, at the Sperl no pardon is asked or given.

"And now begin the preparations for the real dancing. To keep the unruly crowds back, a long rope is put up and all who remain in the center of the hall are separated from the actual dancers. The boundary, however, is fluctuating and flexible, it is only possible to distinguish the dancers by watching the girls' heads in steady rotation. The couples waltz straight through any accidental hindrances in their joyful frenzy; no god holds them back, not even the intense heat which is carried backwards and forwards in penetrating waves, as if driven by African desert winds.

"Very characteristic is the beginning of each dance. Strauss in-

tones his trembling preludes; panting for full expression they sound tragic like the happiness felt in childbirth while pain still reigns. The Viennese male partner tucks his girl deep in his arm and in the strangest way they sway themselves into the measure. For a time we hear the prolonged chest tones with which the nightingale begins her song and enchants our nerves; then suddenly her resounding trill rings out, the actual dance begins with whirling rapidity and the couple hurls itself into the maelstrom . . .

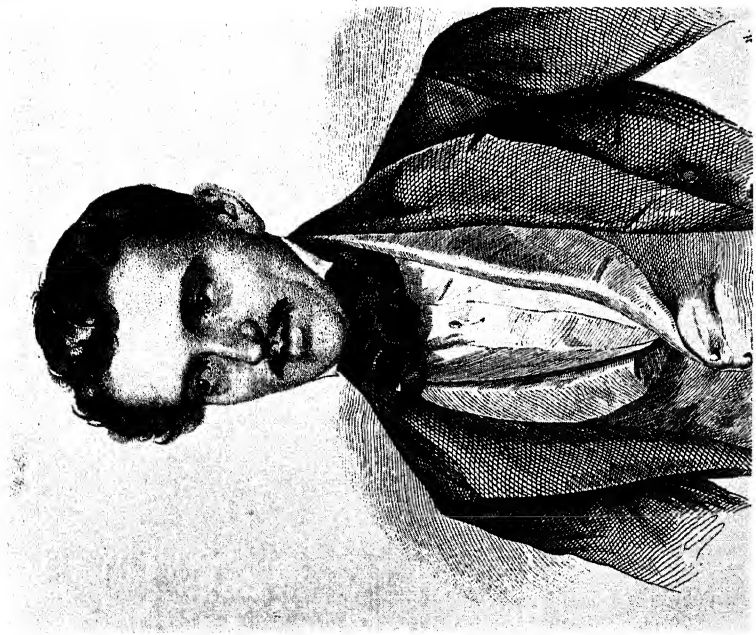
"I was never present at any excesses in that place; there was no brandy to bemuse the senses, no Red Indian fire-water and no one was drunk. The light Austrian wines do no more than make one aware of one's senses, and the Viennese have large stomachs but narrow throats.

"These orgies last till the early morning, then Austria's musical hero, Johann Strauss, packs up his violin and goes home to sleep a few hours and to dream of new battle stratagems and waltz themes for the next afternoon . . . The heated couples stream out into the warm night airs of Vienna and disappear with fond giggles in all directions."

These descriptions of Laube's are very valuable from the point of view of cultural history. They are "travel pictures" in the manner of Heinrich Heine and, in spite of the superlatives he uses so freely, may be trusted as the result of accurate observation. They help us to realize the strange fact that the civilization of a whole epoch culminated in the dance. The Paris revolution of July, 1830, passed Vienna by, making as little impression as the revolution of 1789. Civilization at that time and place was not only unpolitical but for all its sensual grace was intellectually very shallow. In 1833, Goethe had been dead about a year, Schubert five years, Beethoven six, Haydn twenty-four, Schiller twenty-eight, and Mozart forty-two. It was almost as if they were all forgotten . . . Profound creative art, in so far as it was problematic, could go begging. The



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FERDINAND RAIMUND

highest honors were reserved for the ball-room music of a conductor of genius. And it is not even true to say, as Laube did, that Strauss' waltzes were anathema to scholarly musicians. When hundreds of thousands of people are enchanted, this fact has power to alter the standards of aestheticism.

New standards were demanded and were forthcoming. Hardly ever had music been spoken of as was that of Strauss, because till then no music had had such demotic strength. On the one hand, Strauss' waltzes were able to stand up to the critical aesthetic analysis of such masters of music as Schumann and Mendelssohn were to become, and on the other they were comprehensible and necessary to all; they had grace and charm for educated palates and were yet extremely useful at popular festivals. This combination of absolute with applied music consolidated Strauss' influence to such a degree that he became supreme ruler.

Like other supreme rulers whose will is unchallenged, Strauss could be completely unscrupulous and at times inartistic and barbarously uncultured. These potentialities he harbored side by side with a sensitive intellectual conscience and a fine appreciation of art and culture. The self-same Strauss who nursed his anger against a member of his orchestra for several years because in the Prelude to *Fidelio* he had failed to come in at the proper moment ("Beethoven is sacred"), that same Strauss actually engaged for his orchestra a man who could imitate women's voices and for a whole summer allowed him to sing Rosina's cavatina from Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Seviglia* in garden concerts. "The public demanded it. The public climbed on benches and chairs in order to have a better view of the singer whose bearded mouth brought forth falsetto tones and trilled coloraturas." The Napoleon of dance music did not despise circus attractions of that kind. Fireworks had long been obligatory wherever he appeared. In a grotesquely frivolous article the wish had been expressed "to see him conduct-



ing in water." This was frivolous because five years before there had been a terrible collapse of ice on the Danube and Strauss' native district, the Leopoldstadt, had been flooded and many people drowned. The writer of the article nevertheless regretted the absence of floods at a Carnival ball in the Augartensaal. "It was held at a time when a break-up of ice was expected which might have flooded the whole place together with its merry inmates. The idea gave the entertainment a piquant flavor. It was new and original because, although conflagrations were not unknown,\* yet the history of carnivals had never yet reported a flood at a ball. To spend a few days in the water and to go home by boat, how romantic that would have been. But nothing of the kind happened. The Danube had the sense to recognize that even if it did not show itself the festival would not be a dry entertainment; the guests would be provided with sufficient moisture by the floods of ice creams, lemonade and champagne."

A different elementary force attacked Austria at that time and that was the cholera. But not even that terrible scourge interrupted the frenzied waltzing at the Sperl and the other halls where Johann Strauss conducted his own works. Richard Wagner is a witness to this.

In July 1832, nineteen-year-old Wagner paid his first visit to Vienna. He traveled from Leipzig with a Polish Count who was a passionate advocate of his people's struggle for freedom against the Russians and infected Wagner with his politics. At Brünn, Tyszkiewicz left Wagner alone to succumb with all the instability of his nineteen years to an agony of terror of the cholera. At first, on arriving at his hotel, he controlled himself and gave no sign, but when he was conducted to an isolated wing of the house to

\*An allusion to the ball given in July, 1810, by the Austrian Ambassador in Paris, Prince Schwarzenberg. It was a ball in honor of the new Empress Marie Louise. It ended with a catastrophe. The hall caught fire. The Emperor and Empress just managed to save themselves, but the wife of the Ambassador was burnt to death.

sleep and was suddenly left alone there, he threw himself fully dressed on his bed and tremblingly recalled all the ghost stories of his childhood. He was very friendly with Theodor Apel, a son of the author of the "Ghost-book" from which Weber had extracted his *Freischütz*. And so Wagner was not surprised to see the cholera appear to him that night in the shape of a living, hollow-cheeked Fury. She swayed about his room, embraced him with bony hands; his limbs turned to ice and no part of him seemed to be alive, except his heart which still continued to beat. He did not know whether he were awake or dreaming. But the next day he astonished himself by rising, washing and traveling to Vienna.

Once in Vienna, Wagner was amazed by the strange indifference to the cholera shown on all sides. Although the disease usually kills its victims within a few hours, "nobody," Wagner writes to his friend, "dreams of altering his way of life and the places of amusement are crowded." And then the mania for rapid rotation which sweated all danger out of the people, seized on him too: "I visited the theater, listened to Strauss, went for excursions and altogether had a good time." This by the way led to his making debts which he had to pay off later when he was conductor in Dresden. Vienna was a city more closely bound up with the life of the people than any young Wagner had seen before; Leipzig, the metropolis of the German book trade, was much more intellectual, much more restrained and less naive in its manifestations of popular life than Vienna. Wagner's particular admiration was given to Raimund as a genius capable of moving the people, but his impressions of Strauss were so overwhelming as to transcend everything else. After seeing a performance of Hérold's *Zampa* in the Josefstädter Theater, Wagner went into the Sträusslsaal next door where Strauss, the wizard, was playing. Strauss' own enthusiasm impressed Wagner most. He describes it as excitement border-

ing on mania, rising anew with each waltz and brought to danger-point by the blissful exclamations of an audience intoxicated far more by his music than by the liquids they had imbibed.

It is instructive to observe how Wagner, the cultural expert, in transcribing his impressions of Johann Strauss, dwells on the social rather than the aesthetic aspect. And indeed, the frenzy into which Strauss and his waltzes threw the population of Vienna was a very extraordinary social phenomenon only comparable to the mass transports of antiquity. A report by Kurländer, a journalist of the thirties, on the Festival of St. Bridget, gives further confirmation of the frantic enthusiasm aroused by Strauss. More than forty thousand people were assembled in the Brigittenau. "There were green tents made of twigs, lanterns radiated their colored lights and over it all the moon shone with magic brightness. It was as if the Birnam woods from Macbeth had come alive again and a rotating movement had seized on the meadow and all its surroundings as far as the eye could reach. The masses of people waltzed over mountains and down into valleys, stumbled on the grass and then went on waltzing; it was a Red Indian festival."

What now was the nervous child who fifteen years before under Pamer had begun to draw sounds from his beloved fiddle? A tyrant ruling over bodies, nerves and souls.

# 4

## Conquest of the World

*Strauss is the most popular musician on earth. His waltzes enchant the Americans, they are heard across the Chinese wall, they resound in African bivouacs, and a friend of mine from Vienna wrote me not long ago how deeply it had touched her when she trod on Australian soil and a beggar playing a Strauss waltz asked her for alms . . .*

LUDWIG AUGUST FRANKL

### STRAUSS CONQUERS NORTH GERMANY

"You must go away, take a long journey. An artist's sphere of influence is the world." These are the opening words of Carl Maria von Weber's fragmentary novel *Künstlerleben*.

The waltzes composed by Johann Strauss of Vienna, published by Tobias Haslinger, had long before winged their way into the world. And now Strauss felt the urge to follow them. Vienna, the city which his unambitious colleague Lanner hardly ever left, had grown too small for him. Strangers had told Strauss that Europe was waiting for him. This was not simply flattery. Paler and more restless than ever, he made preparations, financial and artistic, to undertake a concert tour in the north.

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He had already been to Buda-Pesth, but the public in that city was spiritually akin to the Viennese. Now when on All Saints' Day, 1834, he loaded his orchestra on to express mail coaches en route for Berlin, he was to encounter an alien public. A few days later he stood on the platform before King Friedrich Wilhelm the Third and the Prussian Court.

The jealousy between Berlin and Vienna, the two great German capitals, was at that time as great as it had ever been. The rivalry between north and south, well known from a hundred thousand details of cultural, intellectual and religious history, is always present where many Germans are assembled. The great mass of German people between the North Sea and the Alps constantly experiences tiny, hardly perceptible electric discharges emanating from the great opposite poles of Catholicism and Protestantism, of Habsburg and Hohenzollern, of the musically comfortable mode of life and the energy-laden impulse to progression. Wherever an Austrian meets a Prussian there is always a repetition—be it in a glance, a movement of the hand, a tone of the voice—of that Seven Years' War which exercised exactly the same function in the seventeenth century; or of the last great battle for dominance in Germany which was fought in 1866 between Austria and Prussia.

November was the right month for Strauss to attack Berlin. Entirely devoid of lyricism it put a man on his mettle. He had to seize on a naturally frosty public and melt it with the breath of his music. True, once the "Berliner" had melted, he was the best listener in the world.

And the Berlin public did melt. Cheers brought the house down when Strauss played his waltzes in the Königstädter Theatre. It was the complete contrast of his manner to the Berlin manner that carried the people away. Innate in many North-German people is a notable feeling for justice; they value in others what they can

neither produce themselves nor would wish to produce. The Viennese is less magnanimous in that way; he would hardly allow a native of Berlin to make a successful attempt at producing in Vienna his typically sober, angular and realistic art. The impressionable Viennese remained cold whenever North-German art sought him out, but the cold North-German grew warm when Vienna came to him. It is a strange phenomenon and just as existent today as in the time of Strauss a hundred years ago. Karl von Holtei wrote two farces dealing with this Viennese weakness. One is called *The Berlin Citizen in Vienna* and the other *The Viennese Citizen in Berlin*. They show the difference in the nervous reaction of the two cities to each other.

Berlin popular wit very soon found its mark in the pale little Viennese Orpheus with his sunken forehead. "Look at little Strauss. He has turned all our good citizens into Viennese." Czar Nicholas and the Czarina of Russia were present at one of the Court concerts. They overwhelmed Strauss with praises and asked him whether he would be willing to join their followers on the journey back to St. Petersburg. Strauss, however, was bound by a long contract to Scherzer and the Sperl and said so. He gave the same reason for his refusal when the Princess Wilhelm, wife of the future King and Emperor, attempted to keep him in Berlin. He was hardly actuated by homesickness, but rather by the duty of attending the coming Carnival. On the way back to Vienna he gave concerts in Dresden and Prague, everywhere arousing amazement and being fêted and loved both by the highest society and the simplest of citizens.

Three-quarters of a year later he made another excursion, this time to western Germany and gave concerts in Munich, Augsburg, Stuttgart, Wiesbaden, Heidelberg, and Frankfurt. The year after he widened the area of his now customary journey to Germany. He went via Leipzig, Halle, Magdeburg, Brunswick, and Hanover

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to Hamburg, Bremen and Oldenburg. At Düsseldorf he trod for the first time the strange soil of Lower Germany and this enticed him farther into Flemish country, to Amsterdam, the Hague, Liège and Brussels. He also appeared in Cologne, in Aix, in Mainz, and in Würzburg. And with that the whole of Germany bowed to the waltz. The missionary character of his music had become clear.

It was, however, not the first time that a great Austrian had celebrated his greatest successes in the north. A year before, Strauss had met in Munich the modest man who could have explained it to him. That was the Austrian Raimund, his fellow-countryman and his friend. In many ways he was very like Johann Strauss; in the midst of his greatest successes he was aware only of the cabals, his opponents' intrigues against him, his colleagues' envy. Raimund, whose influence depended on the spoken word, which is not nearly so effective as music, nevertheless had a success in North Germany unequalled by anyone. With his soft manner reminiscent of warm southerly winds, he melted the hearts of the Berlin public. The public of the Prussian capital began to adore in Raimund what it did not possess itself. Strauss, too, loosened German rigidity. As long as its tones reverberated, the waltz brought north and south together.

### "ROMANTIC AND CIVIC"

How did it come about that the three-quarter rhythm acquired its universal domination? There were other dances in the world besides the waltz. In Paris they danced the quadrille. And in Elbeteinitz, near Prague, a beautiful peasant girl with a folded kerchief on her head and a great many pleated skirts, had just invented the Bohemian polka, the national dance of the Czechs to which all composers, including Strauss, had already made their obeisance. Then there was the Polish mazurka. It seemed that the

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nations that were not allowed to express themselves in politics were beginning to find an outlet in the dance.

But there could be no question that the waltz ruled supreme. Viennese at first, it became German in general and finally European.

Perhaps it was because it was the only thing that satisfied the two opposite poles of the epoch. The waltz was both civic and romantic and harmonized these contrasting qualities.

The waltz was the dance of romanticism. The very earliest German romanticists, the brothers Schlegel, had pronounced infinity to be the aim of art. That was a challenge to classicism, which was essentially rational. As in life, so in art, the *finite* sufficed for enlightened classicists. But not for the romanticists—they sought the infinite.

In mathematics the infinite is symbolized by a recumbent figure eight, a winding noose which flows back upon itself. Whereas the minuet, the dance of enlightenment and classicism, began and ended with the dancers in a prescribed posture, the waltz had no true beginning or end. It flowed back on itself like a circle, a globe, a cylinder. The act of dancing a waltz was infinite and gave the dancer a taste of infinity.

Literary and philosophic demands are never made consciously except by the very few. And yet large groups of people succumb to their unconscious persuasion. There were very few creative romanticists round about the year 1800. But influenced by them, the whole of society had become romanticized by 1830. While as late as 1750, rotation had been pronounced dangerous, repugnant and undisciplined, it was now in high favor. It gave people the delightful sensation of being lost in space. Even vertigo had lost its terrors.

The romanticists, then, found pleasure in the waltz because it



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gave them the illusion of infinity. To the unromantic bourgeois it appealed in a different way.

Anyone looking on at a perfectly danced waltz receives two contrasting impressions. The first is that of a centrifugal force generated by rotation and threatening to hurl the dancers into space. The second counter-balances it by convincing the onlooker that the support given by each partner to the other is so strong that there is no danger in their joyous abandonment. In other words, no dance draws man and woman so closely together as the waltz, and this is its attraction for the bourgeoisie.

### THE FRANCE OF LOUIS PHILIPPE

On October 4, 1837, Strauss and his orchestra, twenty-eight men in all, took their seats on an express post-chaise bearing the sign "Vienna-Strasbourg-Paris." Vienna was amazed and rather apprehensive. Would Strauss be successful in Paris?

The Viennese waltz was a plant grown in Viennese soil. In spite of some differences in the mental attitude of the lands influenced by Berlin, all German society was similar to the Viennese. There were romanticists and bourgeoisie in all Germanic countries. But Paris? It was almost like a new continent.

In the 1830s Paris was indubitably the intellectual capital of the earth, even more so than in the period of the Louis or in the days of Napoleon when the continual wars had suppressed progress. It was not till the long period of peace after 1815 had set in that the restlessness of French genius reached its height. It was as if the life of Napoleon had been a rich impregnation: the qualities of his genius, the heritage of his thought were suddenly scattered among hundreds of thousands of people. Everybody in Paris began to invent, became an engineer or a chemist, philosophized, wrote poetry, painted or wrote plays. Around the year 1835 there was in Paris a

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tropical fertility in the intellectual sphere which surpassed even that of the era of Diderot and the Encyclopaedists.

The conceptions "romantic" and "bourgeois" existed here too, but in a form in which there was nothing left of the German easy-going quality. In France what was called romantic was the abstruse, the horrible, the ghostly extravagant as incorporated in the person of the "new Shakespeare," Victor Hugo. In him there was none of the engaging artlessness of German romanticism. The bourgeois element was supplied by Honoré de Balzac with his gigantic picture of life in all its phases. Victor Hugo's romanticism and Balzac's bourgeois art went different ways in France. There was nothing to combine them on the analogy of the German waltz.

The keynote of French culture, whether it was expressed in the drama, in a novel, in politics or in social phenomena, was experiment. The *École Polytechnique* dominated the intellects of Paris, somewhat as the military General Staff had done in the Empire period. Technical bravura and complicated exercises were important factors even in the arts. Never anywhere have there been fewer dilettantes.

What was Strauss to do there? What was to be his part in a city where Meyerbeer's scintillating music reigned triumphant and men like Bellini and Cherubini were the current idols? Love and the waltz might be soul-mates in Vienna, but there was no such combination in Paris. Nor did Weber's *Invitation to the Dance*, which stirred the Austrians so deeply, arouse any profound sentiments in the French. Senancour's *bon mot*, uttered just before Strauss came to Paris, throws some light on his countrymen's mentality at the time: "If Naples belonged to the French, they would probably build a ballroom in the crater of Vesuvius and dance there."

Our modest Strauss ought to have been terrified when he crossed

the Rhine at Kehl. That this journey to Paris was nevertheless decisive for his universal fame was due to pure chance, or rather to a favorable misunderstanding.

One of the strange peculiarities then cultivated in Paris was a joy in everything German. Napoleon's illustrious foe, Madame de Staël, had discovered Germany twenty-five years before. In 1835, Heinrich Heine, the emigrant, had also written a book about Germany. Hugo, Gérard de Nerval, Théophile Gautier all praised Germany as they saw and understood it; the profundity of German music, the abysses in Weber and Schubert remained alien to them in their inmost hearts, possibly because all these authors approached the "dangers of music and the woods" (that is what Henri Beyle-Stendhal said of Germany) too much in the manner of painters. However that may be, Strauss came from Germany. He came from that East which in French literature was looked upon as a haven of rest. Only the restless can be so in love with rest as the French of that time were in love with Germany. They loved her as something strange and rare which commanded worship and was yet somehow ridiculous. "*Les Autrichiens nous donnent un bonheur lourd*," Balzac in one of his stories makes a Venetian say who was considering the respective advantages of French and Austrian rule for the State of San Marco. So the French probably felt that Strauss, who came from Austria, was a fragment of this ponderous good fortune. What in Vienna was looked upon as stimulating and acted like champagne, was in Paris on the contrary felt to be weighty and intense.

That Strauss happened to come into an atmosphere favorable to all things German was the accident that brought him success. That, and of course his quality. His waltzes were like very fine chiselings on a small surface. This very minuteness taken in conjunction with the complicated nature of his work, this and his virtuosity enchanted his public. A city that was barely acquainted

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with music in the home was possibly not able to appreciate how sentimentally important the waltz was to lovers. But the audience was thrilled by the novelty and dazzling quality of Strauss' compositions, which had profited by his study of orchestral technique. Strauss was no dreamy dilettante—that was the second reason for his success.

Good music seemed to cause the French a kind of excitement akin to that aroused by politics. Strauss had a taste of the dangerous dialectics in which the French sometimes indulged, even before he came to Paris. In Strasbourg, on October 20th, he was just giving his second concert and the municipal theater was packed, when the Prefect of Police sent a message through an official that a trumpeter from Strauss' orchestra was to come before the curtain and give a military signal. Strauss obeyed unwillingly. On the instant there was absolute silence. The Prefect, who was in the foremost box, stood up and announced that the city of Constantine in Algiers had been conquered by Damrémont's troops the day before. This victory in northern Africa, in a colonial war which hardly touched France's vital nerve, aroused tumultuous enthusiasm to which a thousand voices gave vent. There came a second signal and with a break in his voice the Prefect gave out the news that General Damrémont had fallen. Sobs resounded through the auditorium, women pulled out their handkerchiefs. A third signal. The Prefect in the box, like an actor playing the part of a politician, invited the Strasbourg audience to sing the Marseillaise in honor of the expeditionary army, of both the dead and the living heroes: "*Vive la France! Vive l'armée! Vive le général Damrémont, le vainqueur de Constantine!*"

As the last notes of the cheering died away Strauss drew his bow across his violin. Borne on the tide of national pride and sorrow, his Strasbourg waltz concert became a success that was glorified in many a column of the Paris press.

On October 27th he came to Paris. He felt very insecure. The reason was his orchestra, which was too weak; it had not occurred to him that with twenty-eight musicians he could hardly compete with the immense scale on which things were done in Paris. Moreover, when making his arrangements in Vienna, he had underestimated the strong competition that the Parisian orchestras of light music would certainly bring to bear on him. At their head was the great Musard with his ninety-six men, each of whom was an artist. He had the best double basses and hautboy-players in all Paris. Daily in his own hall he would play overtures, quadrilles, contredanses. Waltzes were also included in his programs, but more because they were the fashion than to satisfy a compelling need. The real drawing-room dance of the French of the thirties up to the middle of the century was the quadrille, the less rigid bourgeois successor to the minuet. With its many figures it had a rhetorical, a dialectic effect, not unlike a game of chess played by human beings with their own bodies. Besides Musard there was the conductor Dufresne, the ruler over the large and beautiful Salle Saint Honoré, who like Strauss had made it his aim to be first and foremost a pacemaker for serious music. He forced symphonies by Beethoven, Mozart and Haydn on his public. These were Strauss' formidable competitors. For days he was in melancholy mood. On November 1st, he gave his opening performance. In spite of high prices there was a rush for seats. Strauss trembled with nervousness. As always in France and Italy the house in its restlessness resembled nothing so much as a hive of bees. The noise did not cease till Strauss reached his desk.

He had good reason to be nervous. The cream of the Parisian world of music was present and this meant that world fame was in the balance. Vienna and Berlin, though they might harbor the profounder spirits, were not so influential as the Parisian school. The great Auber listened attentively when his prelude *Les Faux-*

*Monnayeurs* resounded. Cherubini too, the creator of *Les Deux Journées*, paid strict attention. And so did Berlioz, the composer of the *Sinfonie Fantastique*, Berlioz who was carrying on a comical feud with Cherubini. A few days before, when General Darnémont had fallen at Constantine, each of them had submitted a *Requiem* for performance. The choice had fallen on Berlioz, and Cherubini could not forgive him for it. The great idols of the Parisian opera were on bad terms with each other, and many and deadly were their reciprocal intrigues. But here they sat together in the *Gymnase* as a committee of experts, listening to the *Gabriel-enwalzer*, a tit-bit for their experienced palates. Strauss had regained his courage and fiddled away in Viennese fashion, now boldly, one foot forward, the upper part of his body thrown back, now in a clinging posture, "fiddling down into the well," which is almost a Hungarian fashion. This was new to the Parisian masters. The physical nonchalance of the Viennese musician was very un-French, but it was attractive because it was exotic. His success was conclusive.

On the fifth of November, Strauss and his orchestra played to the King. They strode through a long ante-chamber where a company of infantry was resting beside a pyramid of guns. This fully-armed band of men in a closed apartment seemed to the Viennese to be half uncanny, half revolutionary. It was a reminder that they were in the Tuilleries where nearly fifty years before the people had done battle with the Swiss Guard. True, France had a King, but the French soldiers were sons of the people, Republicans. Their King called himself "King of the Bourgeois." Strauss and his followers wound slowly up a red-carpeted staircase and finally arrived in the great concert-hall; there they were staggered by finding themselves face to face with a white marble statue of the bourgeois king on horseback. Twenty candelabras distributed such intense heat and brilliance that water poured out of the eyes of the visitors.

They were conducted behind a brass rail by attendants in magnificent attire. It was like a sitting of the Law Courts or a popular assembly. Suddenly the beat of drums resounded from the extreme ends of the palace and reverberated dryly through the halls. Accompanied by a host of glittering courtiers, diplomats and officers in uniform, King Louis Philippe appeared—the greatest possible contrast to his equestrian statue. He represented the first conscious incarnation of the age: a King, not for the army, but for the industrialists, the bankers and the intellectuals. He was the first of a series of modern rulers who almost boasted of their fidelity to a constitutional government. His inconspicuousness was the most conspicuous thing in the world. Talking in loud tones, taking no notice of the musicians, the Court took their seats in red velvet easy-chairs. A youngish man in civilian dress, seated on Louis Philippe's right, rose suddenly, looked through his lorgnette, took one step towards the barrier and made a sign to Strauss which embarrassed the latter considerably. It was Leopold, King of the Belgians, who a few years before had been a German Prince, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.

King Leopold owed his crown to an opera. If *La Muette de Portici* had not been performed in Brussels in 1830, and if Auber the Parisian had not roused the people's courage with it, they would probably not have rushed out into the streets of Brussels and driven the Dutch away.

In a mist of embarrassment Strauss saw the King approaching. He heard him say in German across the barrier, "Mr. Strauss, haven't we met before—in Brussels?" Strauss did not know what to answer. In this medley of styles he could not imagine what etiquette demanded of him. He made a deep bow as he would have done in Schönbrunn and remained in that posture until Louis Philippe sent one of his gentlemen to him with a polite request to begin playing.

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After the first few numbers the entire aspect of the hall changed completely. The French magnates were standing among the violin-stands and conversing with the players. Louis Philippe went up to Johann Strauss and, throwing etiquette to the winds, gave him both hands, saying, "Your waltzes have been familiar to me for a long time, my dear Mr. Strauss. It gives me all the more pleasure that you have done me the honor of appearing here personally." The Duke of Orleans took the violin out of Strauss' icy hands and attempted to play on it himself. While Strauss watched him with anxiety, the Queens of France and Belgium entered into conversation with him. Strauss had not been presented to them. Not till he had been talking to them for some time did he realize who they were; both sovereigns made a point of behaving like ordinary citizens, as the political mode demanded. When the concert was over and champagne was being passed round, Louis Philippe made an impromptu speech to his Viennese guests. The social differences between the orchestra and its distinguished audience were swept away so ruthlessly that the musicians had the feeling that the concert was being continued on the social plane, with everyone playing an appointed part and no one word-perfect.

This patently democratic festival given by the Court to the Viennese musicians curiously enough increased the byzantine admiration of the Parisians for Johann Strauss. To have been received at Court was an honor. The day after the concert the King sent a messenger to Strauss at his hotel with 2000 francs and a diamond pin. Exactly the same treatment as a potentate in the eighteenth century would have meted out to his artists. Essentially nothing was changed. The façade of equality was only a superficial polish; an artist appeared and was as usual rewarded by a handsome gift sent from the royal or the bourgeois drawing-room. After this excursion Strauss returned to the concert life of the French capital. He had allied himself to his rival Musard for the purpose of giving



thirty concerts. The Austrians were to play the first part of the program till the long interval, Musard's two hundred Frenchmen performed during the second part of the evening. In this way Strauss secured for his ten times smaller company an atmosphere as of chamber music. The contrast intrigued the Parisians: Strauss with his delicately intimate resources and Musard with his pomp seemed to be vying with each other for the favor of the audience. Thus in a way, each was useful to the other.

The Viennese were accustomed to festivals, but their enthusiasm for carnivals had nothing in common with luxury. The Viennese citizens were not rich; since the year 1811, since the catastrophic devaluation of the gulden, they had lost their fortunes and Viennese jollity smacked somewhat of the pawnshop. In Paris, Strauss and his men for the first time encountered western European wealth, took part in festivals where all the adjuncts were of the best. The wine served was not of the home-grown variety, but of rich vintage and potentially dangerous. Strauss therefore categorically forbade his men all alcohol, at any rate during a performance.

He was a strict disciplinarian with his orchestra. His colleague Dufresne permitted his musicians to leave the concert platform between the pieces, and they would disport themselves about the hall and greet their acquaintances. If they were not in their places when the next piece started they had to pay a fine of two francs. Strauss' orchestra was always in place without any such punitive measures. His men loved him and feared him as a company its captain on the battlefield. They were proud of the light he shed on them and wrote enthusiastic letters home.

Nevertheless, the master was the complete autocrat. Nine days before Christmas his men were seated at the midday meal when he rushed in saying "We are leaving for Rouen this evening." He was entirely indifferent to the probability that these young men

would have made private engagements for the next few days. His orders were those of an officer to his troops.

Soon, therefore, they were all seated in the post-chaise. Three concerts and a masked ball in Rouen, then off again. Once more, Strauss had given no previous notice to the musicians. This time they found themselves in express coaches on the way to Le Havre, the center of the French coffee trade. The richest merchants in France lived there; besides these, Americans and citizens of Hamburg were present at the concert.

The supper was still more overwhelming than the feasts in Paris had been. The silver corks from fifty-four bottles of champagne flew simultaneously into the air. The hall swam in intoxication and Strauss was the only one who remained sober. Most people rolled under the table, overcome by the succession of toasts. Only semi-conscious, the Viennese were helped into their carriages the next morning. They were returning to Rouen, where for their midday meal Strauss invited them to a rich *déjeuner* with champagne. He had heard a doctor say that the effects of intoxication with champagne could only be cured by the same beverage; the prescription worked.

On December 23rd a Christmas spirit of home-sickness seized on the men. Did people in Rouen have Christmas trees? They began to yearn for their wives and children, for all the beautiful "crackling" customs; for baked apples and chestnuts and wax candles among the pine-needles. Had Strauss no such sentiments? It was whispered that he was not too domesticated. In any case, on Christmas Eve there was another magnificent supper. And so that no sadness should supervene, this was followed by a masked ball with gaming-tables and orgies supported by liqueurs and champagne. In the Rouen theater there was waltzing till four o'clock in the morning. A strange race—the French—why did

these free-thinkers choose the sacred Christmas night to costume themselves so extravagantly as to be almost blasphemous? Nuns were to be seen whirling wildly in the arms of Capuchin monks. In the cold dawn the Austrians' traveling carriages were on the road to the capital.

The Parisian carnival was like a dragon making its snaky way through the streets. In some of the squares, stoves were set up and around them crouched the shivering figures of impudent harlequins or Turks with Spanish ladies on their arms. The large number of artists in Paris made their presence felt, and at times the whole city, seemed like one huge studio populated by models. Enjoyment was not so primitive here as in Vienna, but more sharply outlined and very much wittier. From December 27th till February 28th the Viennese orchestra gave a concert every evening, sometimes in public, sometimes in the private houses of the rich Faubourg St. Honoré. On New Year's Eve Maurice Schlesinger gave a party; he was the editor of the *Gazette Musicale* and held in his hands all the threads that ran from the opera management to the composers. He registered and subsidized even the unborn children of French music. His word meant life or death, as everybody worked for him. Wagner mentions him in his *Memoirs*. This time the New Year party was held in honor of Strauss. Meyerbeer felt impelled to point out the "modesty" with which Strauss, "unequalled in his own sphere," accepted the honors dealt out to him by Schlesinger. Jacques Fromental Halévy, the eminent composer of *La Juive*, overwhelmed him with compliments, and Cherubini politely insisted that Strauss played like an Italian. Paganini, the pale weird-looking violinist who was believed by the romanticists to have sold himself to the devil in order to gain a better mastery of the fiddle, stared at Strauss for a long time and then congratulated him. There were stormy ovations at a party

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given by Count Apponyi at the Austrian Embassy. Anastasius Grün, the poet, made a speech in honor of his compatriot. During these weeks the master appeared to have no sleep at all. Receptions, concerts; concerts, receptions. The parvenu magnificence reached its peak with Baron Delmare, a Frenchman from the South who possessed some twenty millions. The tragic fact that he was blind did not prevent him from organizing parties that lasted for thirty days, parties to which composers, poets and actresses were invited every day and every night. On one of these occasions Strauss was accosted by a very old man who seemed to belong to the realm of ghosts; this was the Prince of Benevent, the same Talleyrand who, since 1793, had carved out single-handed a large part of the history of Europe. And now he laid the tired hand which had been raised so often in swearing allegiance to so many governments in that of the Viennese master-in-little. At that moment Strauss remembered his poverty-stricken childhood, the alehouse in the Flossgasse where French grenadiers had scolded him when he, a child of five, had crawled between the legs of the taproom tables. That was in 1809, when the great Talleyrand was a Minister under Napoleon. And now Strauss was a grown man and this ancient was still alive.

Strauss was in a position to take a good many liberties. He could even indulge in the obstinacy for which he was notorious in Vienna. At the Ball of the City of Paris, where he and Dufresne were playing together, black dominoes had been prepared both for the Austrian and the French musicians and laid on the orchestra stands. It was the great costume ball of the winter and it had long been the custom to refuse entry to anyone not in fancy-dress. But Strauss, on his own behalf and that of his orchestra, refused to don the black garments. That was beneath his dignity, he was a musician and not a buffoon. The Austrian ambassador went up to him

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on the platform and very gravely explained to him that there would be a riot if he did not conform to the custom. Count Apponyi was followed by de Gasparin, the Minister of the Interior, who pointed out to Strauss that it was impossible for him to disturb the festivities in that way. Strauss remained obstinate, and the festivities remained undisturbed. With a murmur of astonishment the good Parisians digested the fact that their Viennese dance orchestra consisted of gentlemen in ordinary evening dress.

## THE VOICE OF HECTOR BERLIOZ

Every author, every composer or singer in Paris had his staff of critics who fought his battles for him. These cliques cut straight across the artistic life of Paris, fed by influential connections and by money. For this reason a certain ennui damped the excitement felt when Halévy or Meyerbeer produced a new opera. Everybody knew beforehand what editorial brains would think and critics' pens write about it.

One man only was incorruptible and always inclined to tempestuous outbreaks. This was Hector Berlioz, the "French Beethoven," as he has been called. In the melodious smoothness of French music one was as uncomfortably aware of him as of a bunch of syncopated passages.

His work interrupted the tempo in which Paris was accustomed to glide along in comfort. With his *Sinfonie Fantastique* he had taken over this rôle and since then it had been intensified by *Harold en Italie* and the opera *Benvenuto Cellini* with which he was just then occupied. He was a critic as well—from pecuniary necessity, as he never denied. He wrote monthly essays for the *Journal des Débats* and for each of these he was paid 100 francs. All his rancor, his love, his wit, his adoration, his hate were incorporated in these essays. He took Johann Strauss of Vienna as

the starting-point and climax of one of them, an honor the magnitude of which we can hardly appreciate today. With Strauss as his example, Berlioz demonstrated to the Parisians the supremacy of German music. He set him on a plane with Gluck, with Beethoven, with Weber. This was rare good fortune for Strauss; that it was based on a misunderstanding does not concern us. Strauss was the best available outpost of German music for the French; and so Berlioz, whose theme was Germany, used him to illustrate his points.

"It is very strange," says Berlioz, "that in a city like Paris where the best virtuosi and composers of Europe are to be found, the arrival of a German orchestra which does not purport to do more than give a good rendering of its waltzes should have developed into a musical event of such magnitude . . . We were already acquainted with the name of Strauss thanks to the music publishers who have made his waltzes available in thousands of copies; and thanks to Musard who played us some of them. But we have hitherto had no conception of the supreme art, the fire, the intelligence and the superb feeling for rhythm innate in this orchestra.

"The musicians Strauss brought to Paris from Vienna are twenty-six artists. Four first violins, four seconds, one violoncello, two double-basses, two flutes, two clarinets, one oboe, two trumpets, two French horns, one bassoon, one cornet, one trombone, one kettledrum, one harp and the big drum. But as most of these artists have several instruments and can change from one to the other with great rapidity, the swift interchange of light and shade practiced by Strauss is a proof that the members of his little orchestra often double their parts."

Astonishing words, because in actual fact Strauss had still a great deal to learn from French orchestration. But Berlioz will have none of this. "When we remember the resources available

to our expensive conservatories, it seems hardly credible that Paris should not be able to produce either a bass-trombone\* or a double-bassoon, that exquisite instrument that compares with a clarinet much as the English horn compares with the oboe. It is difficult to believe that at the present day we are unable to perform Mozart's *Requiem* as he really wrote it, or *Beethoven's Symphony in C Minor* or Haydn's *Schöpfung* as orchestrated by the masters themselves. But to return to Strauss. The ability shown by the performers on the wind-instruments is not the only thing that seems to me notable. The clarinets attain to nuances of extraordinary finesse, but their tone is never impure; there was special applause for the oboe when it had a solo passage; the flutes possibly are mediocre, but the violins, in spite of their small numbers, bring forth such exquisite modulations that they bear witness to the training of the artists and the inspired precision of their bowing."

As regards the Viennese flutes, however, Berlioz could not throw dust in the eyes of the French. France is the land of the flute. In the century of rococo, French vitality had been nourished on the cool thoughtful sweetness of that instrument. But the violins were a different matter. In his capacity as critic he was quite right in praising Viennese bowing.

"Still," Berlioz continued, "the good points I have praised are not the principal merits of the Viennese; even though they are not at all common, they would hardly be sufficient to explain the great public interest." And then he proceeds to his principal theme, to the true theoretical object of his discourse. "There exists in music a field which has hitherto been neglected both by performing and by creative artists, a field which is nevertheless of enormous im-

\*The passage is instructive as throwing light on the subjective bias of Berlioz' opinions. When his *Requiem for General Damrémont* was performed at the *Dôme des Invalides* (which occurred shortly before, on December 5, 1837) Berlioz had demanded eight bass-trombones from Habeneck, the Director of the Conservatory, apparently failing to receive them. He takes this opportunity of giving vent to his annoyance.

portance. Progress may be noted everywhere, but in this field development has hardly even been begun. To what am I alluding? To *rhythm*. All the Italian and all our French masters have had the same distorted view of rhythm. They all look upon it as an adjunct to melody and harmony, almost as of secondary importance: simply as an aid, the forms of which cannot be changed without bringing disorder and barbarism into the melody."

That is Berlioz' great subject. He discovered for the French the third dimension of music: rhythm. Rhythm, he explained, was an independent dimension, not merely the accompaniment of melody and harmony. Rhythm had its own purpose, its own will. Those who understood this could not be admirers of Rossini and Meyerbeer who made use of rhythm merely in order to preserve their melodies from loss and disorder. For rhythm was a sheepdog, guarding the valuable flocks. For Berlioz it was much more; to the eternal quest for symmetry he opposed syncopation and the "beauty of asymmetrical style." The fact that in 1837 some people were still incapable of appreciating rhythmical values was not an argument that carried any weight with Berlioz. Musical history, he said, taught that every innovation had been misunderstood at first. Thus, for example, the early Middle Ages had had no understanding of harmony, and the attempt made by Claudio Monteverdi to introduce the chord of the dominant seventh had been considered barbaric. Soon one would become accustomed to the "beauty of shattered symmetry." Agathe's great monologue from the *Freischütz* was a proof of this. Nothing more asymmetrical was conceivable, and yet Weber's great German music was so immeasurably true, so psychologically profound and rich.

"The combinations in the realm of rhythm," Berlioz the critic continues, "are possibly quite as numerous as the many combinations in the melodic tone succession. There exist combinations and groups in rhythm similar to those which produce chords, melodies



and modulations. There exist rhythmic dissonances, harmonies and modulations of rhythm. Nothing could be more obvious." If only the Paris Conservatory would pursue rhythmic studies and would consider Beethoven more in detail from this point of view: But was there anyone who really knew Beethoven? And then having taken in Weber, Gluck and Beethoven in a breathless rush, Berlioz returns to Strauss.

"Strauss' musicians had much more practice in overcoming the difficulties of rhythmical changes than our own artists. Their waltzes in which the melody, self-intoxicated, chases and whips up the tempo, are difficult to play; but how easily the Viennese accomplish it, how they charm us with their piquant rhythmic coquetry. That is the reason why Strauss' success seems to me to be a very happy one for the musical development of Paris. I believe in truth that this success is due more to the rhythmical accent of Strauss' German waltzes than to their melodic grace and the brilliance of their orchestration. Strauss operates in a field first opened up by Beethoven and Weber. That is the great field of rhythm; he who cultivates it will have a rich harvest . . ." If Berlioz had remembered that waltz composers in the period before Strauss, the period of "stamping and whirling," had been aware of nothing but rhythm; and if he had realized that the great service Strauss and Lanner had done to music had been to breathe melody into the bare bones of rhythm, then his compliments to Strauss would have been differently expressed. But his words were written and printed; the Titan of French music had made the waltz composer Strauss into a German classic.\* Meanwhile, the modest hero of these honors was inquiring of conductor Musard whether on a free day he might occasionally play a violin part in Musard's orchestra. When Musard in great astonishment inquired why the

\*In return Johann Strauss dedicated his waltz "Der Diamant" to Berlioz.

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great man desired to do such a thing, Strauss answered that he wanted to learn how to play for a quadrille, as he wished to introduce the French dance later on in Vienna. He had to go back to Vienna and in the service of art he did not wish to return with empty hands.

### THE ENGLAND OF THE YOUNG QUEEN

There was a full moon on the night of April 11th when the *S. S. Princess Victoria* carried the Viennese musicians across the North Sea to England. It had not been at all easy for Strauss to tear himself away from the continent. His people had mutinied. Autocrat that he was, he had not told them until the last moment that he intended to go to London. His men were indignant, threw discipline to the winds and called him an adventurer. He had concluded contracts but had demanded no guarantees. They might die of hunger in England if they were unsuccessful and who could guarantee success? There was something of the somnambulist about Strauss. In the midst of the dispute it seemed to occur to him that the coming coronation of the Princess Victoria would entail a flood of coronation balls and festivities. England was in any case the repository of European wealth. After the Paris experiences and criticisms it was inconceivable that they should be unsuccessful. They had only to trust to luck. But of course if there was anybody who did not trust his luck, then he could leave at once.

Four members left. The rest followed Strauss to London. On April 12th the giant metropolis received the company into its wide-open arms. The moment was particularly favorable. An English girl of sixteen was to be crowned Queen and a wave of loyalty and sweetness swept over the country. Anemones and violets seemed to grow for Royalty; sentiment wove itself into a wreath. Waltz-

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music fitted in with all this. England, bourgeois as it was, became romantic enough for the waltz.

Twenty years before, Lord Byron had hurled an epic against the introduction of the waltz. What made Lord Byron take up this attitude? Setting aside his tempestuousness, the superlative ingredient of all his poetry, there remain two reasons, both very strange. One was political. Byron as a fanatical admirer of Napoleon rejected the waltz as being in a way "a part of the Vienna Congress," the living contemporary expression of that Germany that had conquered the much greater Emperor and thrust off his yoke. Byron called the waltz "the Imperial Waltz." In rejecting this "comrade" of the Holy Alliance he was openly rejecting the policy of his own England:

"Imperial Waltz! Imported from the Rhine  
(famed for the growth of pedigrees and wine),  
Long be thine import from all duty free,  
And hock itself be less esteemed than thee;  
In some few qualities alike—for hock  
Improves our cellar—thou our living stock.  
The head to hock belongs—thy subtler art  
Intoxicates alone the heedless heart;  
Through the full veins thy gentler poison swims,  
And wakes to wantonness the willing limbs.

O Germany! How much to thee we owe,  
As heavenborn Pitt can testify below,  
Ere cursed confederation made thee France's  
And only left us thy d——d debts and dances!

To Germany and highnesses serene,  
Who owe us millions—don't we owe the Queen?"

The wife of George the Fourth was, of course, a German. And so Byron goes on for a long time, till he suddenly changes his viewpoint. The waltz now appears to him vulgar, indecently blatant, the acme of impropriety:

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"Round all the confines of the yielded waist  
The strangest hand may wander undisplaced;  
The lady's in return may grasp as much  
As princely paunches offer to her touch.  
Pleased round the chalky floor how well they trip,  
One hand reposing on the royal hip;  
The other to the shoulder no less royal  
Ascending with affection truly loyal!

. . .

Thus all and each, in movement swift or slow,  
The genial contact gently undergo;  
Till some might marvel, with the modest Turk,  
If 'nothing follows all this palming work?'

. . .

Something does follow at a fitter time;  
The breast thus publicly resign'd to man,  
In private may resist him—if it can."

For the rest we must not forget that Lord Byron was lame. And his dislike of "that whiskered growth, the waltz" as of the spurs of the Hussars that were then beginning their clanking progress through English ballrooms must have been at least partially rooted in his own impotence. He must have felt that he was shut out from it all. This secret weakness of motive, perceptible to many, clipped the wings of his satirical verses. They were well-known as a curiosity but they never did the waltz any harm. On the contrary, Byron, by depicting the waltz as something uncanny and sexually damnable, by his over-valuation, provided Puritan England with a dual incitement to dance it.

And now came Strauss to conduct it. And he came at a moment when England, sated with the many gross pleasures of the Georgian period, had reverted to purer amusements. More than any other, the English mode of life adapts itself to its sovereign. Fat and cynical George made loyal England fat and cynical too. And now an inexperienced girl of sixteen mounted the throne. Her

virginal, budding serenity impelled the whole of England to grow young again, to renew itself, to bud.

One of Victoria's graceful pleasures was dancing. She danced the waltz. With restraint and always with some slight astonishment that a Princess should dance a waltz and thus deliver herself, if only for a short time, into the hands of a man. With her touching blue eyes, somewhat too prominent, she would look past her partner's shoulder, smiling into the ball-room. At these Court balls dancing was slow. The rhythm of the dance gained in rapidity the farther away it found itself from the Court. Where the aristocracy mixed with ordinary citizens, the tempo of the waltz was accelerated. Thus the ground was prepared for Johann Strauss and his magic bow and fiddle.

In London his first outing took him to the Austrian Embassy. The Ambassador, Prince Esterhazy, spoke to him very seriously about financial matters. He was to read through every contract that he concluded three times, not only twice. English law was incorruptible; nobody could afterwards plead ignorance of the English language as an excuse for having misunderstood some detail or some clause. Moreover, said the Ambassador, money belonged in the bank and not in the home. "And then I warn you against two things—against excesses and against lawsuits. You are not in France, where publicity is a spicy adjunct to the person of an artist. In England it is always dangerous for a private person to make himself conspicuous." For the rest, he permitted Strauss to head the announcements of his concerts with the following words in large letters: "Under the patronage of His Serene Highness, Prince Esterhazy and several other distinguished persons."\*

Soon Strauss was to learn the importance of these warnings. In

\*It was almost pathetic that Paul Esterhazy should be the one to give Strauss such good advice. Esterhazy was the 'enfant terrible' of European diplomacy and of his own family. People said that he had one hundred children. He was so monstrously extravagant that twenty years later his estates were sequestered.

the first place someone stole £97 out of his jacket pocket. And secondly, two weeks later he actually did appear in a court of law. While still in France he had corresponded and concluded a contract with the owner of a hotel in London. But when with his orchestra he had arrived at the hotel, they discovered that it did not even possess a common dining-room. They moved. The enraged proprietor sued him, and Strauss was summoned before a jury; but as he did not speak English he sent Reichmann, one of his men, in his place with a power of attorney. There sat the Judge in his imposing wig; it was a Pickwickian situation. The statement of claim was based on the letter signed by Strauss in which he had concluded the contract, and this inclined the opinion of the Court in favor of the London hotel proprietor. Even if Strauss had been able to prove that the hotel proprietor had not provided adequate food for them, he should not have moved, but should have sued the hotel proprietor and demanded specific performance. In the course of the arguments it became apparent that there was some misunderstanding; Reichmann's English was not quite adequate. But among the public there happened to be a German who suddenly intervened and thereafter acted as intermediary between the jury and Reichmann. And then it was shown that the Judge had merely meant that Strauss should not have moved out of the hotel in the middle of the week. In England notice could only be given to take effect at the week-end. And so Mr. Strauss would only have to pay the hotel proprietor compensation for a few days. No more than £29 sterling (290 gulden). Strauss, to whom this was reported at his hotel, was at first overjoyed but was later horrified to learn that the costs of the law-suit would be 1400 gulden. The bailiff demanded of Strauss an oath to the effect that he accepted this, that he would pay or procure surety for the sum. "I must not go out into the street until I have found a surety," Strauss, who was beside himself, screamed at Reichmann. "If I do, they will throw me

into a debtor's prison." Reichmann dashed away to Cocks, a music dealer, the English Haslinger so to speak. Cocks soon liberated the waltz-master from his confinement to the house, in return for a promise that Strauss would publish his next waltz with him. Strauss should not have given the promise. But he did it all the same and excused himself later to Haslinger on the ground that it was a case of *vis major*. The waltz in question, it may be noted, was a very gay one. Cocks made a good thing of the waltz; Strauss' nerves recovered from the lawsuit and he rose from success to success.

Music, whether light or heavy, did not seem to be an urgent spiritual necessity in England; but it was treasured as a valuable, a precious stone fitted for the jewelry of supreme social splendor. Accordingly the virtuoso was even more respected in England than in France. In England people enjoyed much more than the mere finesse of the artist, they enjoyed with his playing their own dignity, their power to purchase the best for themselves. When in addition to Johann Strauss and his orchestra there appeared at private parties the male singers Rubini and Lablache, the female singers Persiani, Grisi, Albertazzi, or the eleven-year-old prodigy Terese Milanollo the violinist, then all the most expensive entertainers were assembled. At that time England played the part later taken over by America.

On June 28th, the long-awaited, the supreme national festival took place: Victoria's coronation. Solemn faces surrounded the new Queen; she who was so young played her part in customs that were very old. The antiquated ceremonies, seemingly endless, seemingly a little afraid of themselves pursued their traditional path. "The little figure in the center made all the proper motions. She sat; she walked; she prayed; she carried the Imperial Orb which was far too heavy for her; the Archbishop of Canterbury approached her and forced the ring on to the wrong finger so that

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she almost cried out with the pain; she was led into a side-chapel where the altar was covered with a tablecloth on which were sandwiches and bottles of wine." And while the Queen was passing through all this, people stood closely wedged in the streets of the gigantic city of London and made as much noise as is possible to a race usually so undemonstrative.

Strauss and his Viennese orchestra had taken up positions in front of the Reform Club, which the procession was to pass. The noise of bells and cannons was terrible. To the hymns of the clergy and the commands of the officers was added the ceaseless playing of hundreds of bands reiterating their *God Save the Queen*. Strauss played it too—tirelessly. And when after the procession had passed, the crowds spread right across the street in spite of the constables' efforts to stop them, he retired with his orchestra into the lounge of the Club.

Coronation Day had been preceded for nearly three weeks by preliminary festivities, like a shining avenue leading up to the day itself. Peers and ambassadors and London's richest men vied with each other in their entertainments. Concerts, garden parties, balls; Strauss was in such demand that on most days he had to give three performances, a matinée at the house of some nobleman, a musical afternoon at some big castle in the country, music at night at the Court in London. At the Ball given by Prince Esterhazy in Richmond, the host, Prince Schwarzenberg and Johann Strauss walked through the ball-room arm-in-arm. Again at the ball given by the Duke of Sutherland, Strauss was not only the musician but a guest.\* The Russian Minister, on the other hand, was ill-mannered enough to accommodate the Viennese artists on an open platform

\*That a "money-earning" artist should have been treated on a plane of social equality with the highest English aristocracy is a fact that deserves mention. While it was a matter of course in Paris and not unusual in Vienna, it was quite unheard-of in London. As late as in 1820, the great violinist Louis Spohr caused a sensation when he appeared as a guest at the table of the Duke of Clarence after his performance.



## JOHANN STRAUSS THE ELDER

in such a way that they had to climb up to their places by means of a ladder which was taken away later. At these entertainments Strauss saw cold collations and arrangements which spoke of such unexampled wealth as medieval romancers attributed to society in ancient Rome. The luxury of Paris paled beside the geographical extent of these English garden parties, at which a whole people walked on as supernumeraries. For the ball given by the Baroness Rothschild, three miles away from London, the whole road was lined with torches and rendered light as day. The immense park was lit up; a separate salon had been built for the Strauss orchestra and around it the dancers revolved in the Queen's honor like a race of glow-worms.

"How great England is," thought Strauss, as he stood on high with his fiddle. The stars flamed above him. Far away in the darkness there were new countries, new cities. Everywhere the people wanted him. And now he no longer had thoughts of Vienna.

### THE COLLAPSE

Northwards to Scotland, southwards to England, across the Irish Sea to Ireland, back again to England. In a crazy rush Strauss gave 72 concerts in 120 days. In Paris it had been 86 concerts in three months. On some short railway journey he would doze for a few hours; or in a post-chaise between two English industrial cities he might sleep half a night. And for ever new cities were beckoning him, newly concluded contracts would force him on to some new platform, into new halls with a new audience.

Incredible that he withstood it; still more incredible that his men shared these colossal exertions. Strauss at least bore his own reputation before him as a banner; but the others were nameless. They did it out of enthusiasm for their world-famous leader. Did they not read in all languages that there had never been a musical journey

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such as their own? But they yearned for Vienna. They did not want to be world-famous musicians at the cost of their health.

Strauss was deaf to all protests. When his men murmured and begged him to turn back, he would shrug his shoulders and show the others new letters from English or Scottish towns. His urge to travel and to fiddle, to wander from camp to camp, his continuous restlessness had something alarming about it. His eyes shone and glittered, his black hair stood up in riotous confusion. His face was terribly pale. Sometimes he gave the impression of hardly knowing where he was; it was as if nothing but inexorable routine carried him over great blank intervals of unconsciousness while he was conducting. Was he playing in Birmingham, or was it Bath, Southampton or Glasgow? He suffered from his concert mania as others from erotic passions. No woman enthralled him; he was entranced by nothing but traveling, by the turning wheels of the train. The strange cities, though he hardly glanced at them, were pleasing to his nerves but exhausted them.

In his travels he reached the coast of the Atlantic, and here on the western edge of Ireland he saw the great ocean for the first time. In the infinite repetition of the calmly rolling waves, Strauss for the first time received a powerful impression of something whose name was America. Agitatedly he discussed the matter with Reichmann. Could they not go over there too? Reichmann dissuaded him, but he was frightened and told the others about it.

What could Strauss know of America? Very little, but possibly enough to have confused yearnings to go there. In the eighteenth century, the wish to go to America had still been a social impulse, the expression of a republican, a political will. In the first third of the nineteenth the wish to wander westwards had become purely aesthetic, a romantic need. The distraught lyricism of the man of the epoch urged him towards the west, whither the sun preceded

him every day into the ocean. It was the finite in infinity that Nikolaus Lenau sought on the other side of the Atlantic. Chateaubriand had been there and had so strangely found that "America did not exist" because the reality was Europeanized.

"When he," writes Chateaubriand in his autobiography, "together with his guide . . . reached the primeval forest, he was seized by a divine and joyful intoxication, because at last he felt himself independent. He went from tree to tree, to the left, to the right, and conversed with himself; here there are no more paths, no towns, no empires, no republics, no people. He really imagined that he was alone in the forest; and then suddenly he came upon a host of half-naked tattooed natives who with raven feathers in their hair were dancing the quadrille to a violin. What strange miracle was this? The quadrille was being led by a short, powdered Frenchman wearing muslin cuffs. He had formerly been cook-boy to a French General and the brave redskins had engaged him as a dancing master in exchange for beaver skins and bear's hams . . ." And so far-away America had yearnings towards Europe. Was Strauss acquainted with this anecdote?

The zig-zag hops performed by the Strauss orchestra became increasingly crazy. Now they were in France again, and it was in familiar Rouen that the open revolt broke out. Strauss was insulted by his own people in the theater, he was obliged to break off the concert and discuss the matter in the stage restaurant. There were stormy scenes at this general meeting. One of the 'cello players declared that he had proof that Strauss never intended to return to Vienna, that he had broken with his home and intended to desert his wife and children; and that that was why he intended to drag them all over to America. Reichmann, who was by no means innocent of originating these insinuations, now took Strauss' part, spiked the whole rumor as ridiculous exaggeration and soothed the artists. Strauss, who though flinty-faced had a soft heart, was

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so deeply offended by the riot (the second on this journey) that for weeks he would speak to no one. He ceased to rave about America. Finally, however, the nightly gatherings at their concerts compelled him to return to amiability.

And then came the autumn, a new enemy. On October 4th, 1838, a year had passed since Strauss and his musicians had left their beloved Vienna. There were curses and tears on that day, passed by the orchestra in the town of Halifax. Fog and cold were everywhere. No hotel fires could banish them. In the terrible night of November 1st, they journeyed to Edinburgh. It had been raining for seven days, the roads were flooded, the traveling carriages were up to their axles in water. By the time they arrived in Edinburgh, a day late, they all had colds. A Scottish doctor came to the hotel and prescribed hot claret, nutmeg and ginger "strong enough to wake the dead." They sipped it, perspired and recovered.

Strauss was less fortunate. Between Edinburgh and Glasgow he was attacked by influenza. He sat over a huge fire, coughed and would not go to bed. His tour must not be jeopardized. With a high temperature he traveled to Newcastle, Leeds, Hull, Wakefield and Derby. It was in Derby that a doctor prescribed so much opium for him that Strauss nearly laid both his cough and himself to rest for ever. At the last moment he noticed the mistake. But the wrongly written prescription suddenly brought death to his mind. He was startled and broke off the journey. He realized that he would never recover in the English climate and crossed to Calais. Very weak, he left his hotel in order to conduct a farewell concert. During the third item on the program his strength gave way. He fell to the ground and a scream of horror rang through the hall. Reichmann conducted for him. But the restless audience soon left the hall. Strauss was taken to Paris where he arrived on December 9th. He immediately informed his doctors that he was only exhausted, he did not consider himself ill at all and hoped to

conduct again after four weeks in bed in Paris. On no account did he wish to go to Vienna; he had a horror of being brought home ill. Very seriously the doctors informed him that they could not cure him so quickly. And so Strauss had to consent to being driven to Strasbourg prostrate in a very slow traveling coach; his rapid journeyings were at an end. Strasbourg, of course, was on the way to Vienna. But it almost seemed as if Johann Strauss was not to see wife and children again. He was attacked by a nervous fever and lay unconscious for four days in his Strasbourg hotel.

Numerous people came to Strasbourg across the Rhine bridge from Kehl in Germany. They wanted to see the famous man, the Austrian who was so ill. Several German doctors declared that they could cure the master if he would interrupt his journey to Vienna; they considered traveling dangerous for him. But Reichmann was adamant; Strauss must be brought to Vienna. And in truth the South German air seemed to do him good, although he was already at death's door. Traveling from Kehl to Munich he began to talk a little more. In Linz quite close to his Viennese home he had a new relapse. Delirious he escaped from his sick room in the middle of the night and clad only in his nightshirt walked into the icy street where he collapsed unconscious.

Two days later he arrived in Vienna. He had forbidden anyone to send news to his wife beforehand, and she was fetched out of the theater as Strauss was being carried up the steps. Screaming and wringing their hands thirteen-year-old Johann and his eleven-year-old brother Josef, with three-year-old Eduard, stood before the patient: "Our father is dying!"

# 5

## *Father and Son*

*"Directly after God in heaven comes Papa."*

Authenticated saying  
in the Mozart family

### IN THE HIRSCHENHAUS

He did not die, but he recovered very slowly. For weeks after the fever left him he was too feeble to move. The slightest attempt to get out of bed made him tremble and brought tears to his eyes. But having spent carnival time in Paris the year before, he could not bear to miss a second season in Vienna. Summoning all his energy, he left the house and conducted at a carnival ball at the Sperl. His movements were more like those of a marionette than of a human being. The next evening there was a ball at the Russian Legation at which Royalty was to appear. Strauss, who was out of favor with the Court at the time, felt bound to attend that ball at all costs. He wanted to make his peace.

Franz, the Emperor of the Holy Alliance, had died in 1836. He had been followed by Ferdinand, a prince who was simple to the point of folly. Johann Strauss' journey to England must have annoyed him; he looked on the coronation music for the English Queen as a slight to himself and there was no lack of whisperers

at the Court to keep this feeling alive. Though things had changed since the eighteenth century when Mozart and Haydn had been to all intents and purposes musical slaves of their princely patrons, still there was no denying that Strauss' place was at the Austrian Court. And there were such conceptions as grace and disgrace even in the nineteenth century.

In the summer of 1838 the Emperor Ferdinand desired to be crowned King of Lombardy in Milan, which then belonged to Austria. Strauss, who was kept informed by Tobias Haslinger of everything that happened in Vienna, wrote from his London hotel to Hofrat Löhr, Master of Ceremonies at the Court, saying that he would gladly travel from London to Italy to conduct the music for the festival in Milan. At the same time he inquired whether at the coming Carnival he might again conduct the music at the Imperial Court balls. He was quite happy in England, but he would be still happier if he could cherish the hope that "he had not fallen into disgrace with the whole Court."

Strauss hardly meant this request seriously. He had no desire to return to Vienna, he merely wanted to safeguard himself by taking a hand in the game. He failed. The Emperor appointed young Philip Fahrbach, a very talented musician of twenty-three, formerly a member of the Strauss orchestra, to conduct at the Court balls. And the coronation music for Milan was entrusted to Lanner. That modest composer hardly knew what was happening to him when for the first time in his life he left German-speaking territory.

These were the happenings that caused Strauss to risk his health by conducting at the Russian ball. He came through the first part of the festival quite well, but after the interval he collapsed in a faint. Towards morning the doctors diagnosed far advanced ulceration of the kidney. They told his despairing wife that in all probability the master would not be able to mount a platform again for several years.

And so Strauss, accustomed to triumphs and to an active life of travel, had to resign himself to close confinement in his apartment. This was in the Hirschenhaus in the Leopoldstadt. It housed seventy-seven families. In the early spring came the barrel-organ players, took up their positions in the courtyard and ground out their Strauss waltzes till people threw them money. And the man who a few months before had tasted of the joys of high life in London society, lay immovable on his bed. The odors and the sounds appropriate to the petite bourgeoisie permeated the house: cabbage, cheap tobacco, the steam from washtubs, the crackling of meat and the screams of children.

Strauss had quite a number of children himself and this must have set him some puzzles, as he was not particularly fitted to be a father. There was the eldest, Johann, born in 1825, then Josef born in 1827, Nelli born two years later, then Terese, then Ferdinand (who died young) and finally the youngest Eduard. The little one clung to his mother's apron strings, respected his father, but was afraid of him and behaved to him as to a stranger. The father had his music, but the mother had the children.

Had Strauss then sufficient money to rest for a year or two? He was quite wealthy. According to calculations made by the envious he should have been a millionaire. He was not. The enormous sums he had earned abroad had been curiously dissipated.

He had earned a great deal. Like the pianists Ignaz Moscheles, Sigmund Thalberg, like the violinists Paganini, Spohr, Vieuxtemps and Ole Bull, he belonged to the great corps of virtuosi who filled the concert halls. The superficial aspects of music that sent people to hear Paganini because in prison he was supposed to have learnt how to play on one string, brought Strauss some benefits too. Composers who were not virtuosi earned a great deal less. Compared with them Strauss was a Croesus, and gold rained down on him.



But it did not stay with him, that was the trouble. In the hundred cities that he visited he had made a point of seeing that his little army lived exactly as he did himself. He knew that he could only keep his hold over them if he compensated them for their great exertions by giving them still greater comforts. In Paris for example, he took a whole hotel for them alone (Passage Violette No. 9) for four full months. The quarters had to be paid for even when the men were working elsewhere. For each individual Strauss paid 11 francs a day. There were 26 of them, so that alone came to nearly 300 francs a day. As in the very severe winter all the rooms had to be heated, there were some cold days when there was an extra charge of 100 francs, and this of course did not include the musicians' salaries. Still more expensive than Paris was their life in England, where they traveled about even more. An average day of travel in England, whether by carriage or by train, cost about £100 (1000 gulden). From his first twelve concerts in London Strauss had received 12,600 gulden, but a very large part of this went in subsequent journeyings. "Strauss," Reichmann wrote at the time to Vienna, "rents the best hotels every time and orders the most extravagant meals with so many kinds of dishes that some of us really do not know whether to eat them or drink them. We have every kind of convenience, equal to anything enjoyed by rich travelers . . ." And so it happened that Strauss was by no means a millionaire when he returned from his triumphal procession through the richest cities of western Europe.

On the other hand he had money in Vienna. Frau Anna had taken care of that, making sure that he did not waste it at cards like so many of their friends. Then too he had an ardent admirer who looked after him and constituted himself his treasurer. This was that strange being Carl Friedrich Hirsch, himself a talented musician. He was now an official of the War Accounts Office and thus accustomed to reckon and to save. In his leisure hours he

## FATHER AND SON

would sit with Johann Strauss and calculate the monetary results of his success.\*

Strauss had always exerted himself to the utmost and as a result he was now very seriously ill. He thought over his life and found it unsatisfactory without exactly knowing why. He had long passed out of his wife's sphere, the whole domestic atmosphere did not suit him; he was only happy when standing with his fiddle in his sleekly tailored dress-coat, a soldier of dance music, the mass odors from dancing couples being wafted to him as he stood. Then in the summer there came the added aroma of leaves and the rustling of night breezes sweetening the human breath. That was his world. Not that of his wife.

She was so much occupied with the children that he became jealous. Nor was she so prostrate before him as not to believe that others too could write dance music. Once she had even defended Lanner and gone to a concert given by him. Now though Strauss in his inmost heart certainly paid tribute to his old companion, externally Vienna was divided into "Lannerianer" and "Straussianer" and Strauss did not like his wife to ignore the fact. For the rest he could not complain of being unappreciated. To his children he was a god, but they feared him. Shyly they admired him, but they loved their mother.

From 1836 to 1840, from his eleventh to his fifteenth year, the eldest child Johann was a pupil at the "Schottengymnasium." He made good progress, though his brother Josef did even better.

\*There is still in existence a statement drawn up by Strauss together with Hirsch showing the takings and expenses of a concert not included in an ordinary tour. This was a festival, a summer concert which had taken place in the "Brühl," a place visited by excursionists from Vienna. The statement shows the great expenses incurred: illumination 700 gulden, work on installations, a platform in the open and stands for the public no less. The police who had to be paid to keep order at the festival cost about 90 gulden, supplementary payments to the dance orchestra the same, newspaper advertisement 100 gulden, prospectuses and posters 80 gulden, traveling expenses for the musicians 30 gulden—in short, there were 2,500 gulden costs. As the takings at the box office were 2,800 gulden, Strauss' earnings were 300 gulden. That was not much.

Father Strauss would examine very carefully the reports of the two boys. He himself had had very little education. During his travels in France and England he had become ashamed of his ignorance of foreign languages. His children were to become decent citizens and be respected in the world, not geniuses but men with steady professions. Little Johann was to be a merchant and Josef was to study.

What did they do in their leisure hours? They both learnt to play the piano. Anna had practically to force permission for this out of their sick father. Musician though he was, he hated hearing that they were both making good progress and were even playing at private parties. Lying on his sick bed he held in his hand the school report of his eldest son and read contentedly: "*Strauss, Joannes—e moribus, e doctrina religionis, e doctrina latinae linguae I.—E geographia I.—Ex arithmetica I.*"—Well, that was a very good report, and so as a reward the child might have his piano-forte lessons. After all, it was a social asset to be able to play to people on a grand piano.

But worse was to come. Strauss heard someone playing the violin in the house. From his own room which lay somewhat apart he walked over to that occupied by his boys. There stood little Johann in front of the mirror, fifteen-year-old Johann, playing the violin. He fiddled like an actor, grimacing as he played; it was as if he wanted to copy his father. He played with great dash and verve, in imagination attracting and dominating his audience. He was foppishly dressed, too, and the model was easily recognizable. This was too much for the father and model. He tore the boy's violin out of his hand and then questioned him minutely. It turned out that Amon, a valued violinist in the Strauss orchestra, had long been giving lessons to the boy.

"Outrageous! And where did you find the money to pay my violinist?"

## FATHER AND SON

"I give lessons myself."

"Lessons in what?"

"The piano. I teach the tailor next door. I earn sixty kreuzer a lesson . . ."

In a flash the elder Johann saw his hopes dashed. His own son—a professional musician? Even if fortune had favored him so far, even if he had made something of himself, that could never happen (he was convinced) a second time. Fortune was a jealous goddess. His Johann should not suffer as he had himself. For he had suffered in spite of all his success. The troubles inseparable from an artistic career, the unsettled circumstances, the eternal quarrels with rivals—he would preserve his child from these. He put the violin away in a cupboard and turned the key twice round in the lock. The next day the mother secretly bought a new violin from her household money and gave it to her boy. He now practiced in other people's houses.

But this strange scene cured Johann the Elder. In May he celebrated his recovered health under the fresh green trees in the Augarten. Thousands of people had made the pilgrimage to his benefit performance. Tears of happiness shone in the eyes of the women when they saw their master smiling at them from the platform, paler and more elegant than ever before. He had lain ill for four months, not for years as had been prophesied. The first time he drew his bow across the strings he was himself again.

## THE SON OF HIS MOTHER

A frequent guest at these garden concerts was a certain woman, who had a pretty Viennese face, lively eyes and a smiling expression. She was a milliner and her name was Emilie Trampusch. Not a beautiful name, a name rather for a satire on suburbia. But the name made no difference; behind its vulgar façade there was hidden a very charming woman.

She was to be found in the audience when Strauss gave his concerts in Heitzing, or again in the Sperl. She would clap hysterically. In the intervals she would go up to the orchestra where she seemed to be very familiar with the conductor. It was whispered that he had known her a long time, that she had a son by him. Could it be true? On the other hand, his love could not be so very great if he had calmly left the woman behind in Vienna while he went to Paris and London.

Since his return she had been dressed as never before and this attracted attention. She was the living embodiment of a fashion paper. Strauss, keyed up after his illness, began to devote more time to her than before. The period of his convalescence, which built up his physical powers, also changed his outlook on life. Hardly ever did he have a meal at home in the middle of the day, and after his concerts he would take drives to the outskirts of Vienna accompanied by Emilie Trampusch.

The soft nights excited him and the stars of spring looked down on a master in love. It seemed to him that the perfumes of Paris and London clung to Emilie's clothes. And yet his *chère amie* was uneducated and her character untrained. Something mysterious about her attracted Strauss. Perhaps it was only that for the first time he allowed himself leisure for passion. For hundreds of thousands of people he had created physical emotions by means of his dance fiddle and he himself had remained cold. And now he, a man of thirty-six for the first time abandoned himself unrestrainedly to physical love.

Anna, who had borne this man six children, was flabbergasted. At first she hardly did anything because she thought it would pass. She did not understand what was happening. She was accustomed to women who raved about Johann Strauss. If it had been a Countess she would perhaps have resigned herself to a passing liaison. But that this man who was so worshipped could allow himself to

be dragged down like that was incomprehensible to her. She was told of the diamond brooches that Johann gave Emilie Trampusch. But it was not until Anna learnt that the master had had his illegitimate son christened Johann that she really made a scene. That seemed to her the acme of blasphemy. Now it was not she alone that was threatened, but her whole family, her own son Johann and his younger brothers and sisters. She issued an ultimatum, but in vain. Strauss took no notice. His second family was growing; Emilie Trampusch bore him a daughter. The whole of Vienna knew it and cackled. And then, tired of eternal reproaches, the man took an irrevocable step. He left his home and rented a small apartment in the Kumpfgasse for Emilie and himself. His friends begged him to return, but he refused. A number of bourgeois families avoided him; at the height of his fame and sustained by his obstinacy, he was able to do without them. Like Byron, he shrugged his shoulders. Only he was not a lord and Emilie Trampusch the milliner was no lady.

War was thus declared. Many poisoned arrows flew backwards and forwards from the Hirschenhaus to the Kumpfgasse. The legitimates accused Emilie Trampusch of gigantic extravagance in the matter of dress and jewelry. Emilie on the other hand accused Anna of having no feeling for the "liberty needed by Strauss of the Waltz." In the meantime the second family in the Kumpfgasse gradually increased till there were a son and four daughters; in the legitimate home there lived three sons and two daughters. So Master Strauss had to provide for two wives and ten children. Emilie wasted money. At first Johann Strauss sent five hundred gulden to the Hirschenhaus on every first of the month. That was soon insufficient. Anna Strauss tore herself away from her bitter thoughts and began to plan a remedy.

She had lost Johann Strauss. Strange though this might be, she could no longer doubt it. The poor woman still had the letter of

November 19, 1834, written her by her husband when he left her for the first time to go to Berlin. Like any man in love he had chronicled every trifling happening in that letter. But in 1838, when he was in Paris and London, he had been as silent as the grave. Johann the First had gone out of her life, but she still had his son, a second Johann Strauss.

The father made conditions when he sent money to his legitimate family. Messages came through lawyers that his sons' musical studies were to cease entirely. Mother Anna took no notice, for now it was absolutely necessary that Johann should become a musician. She prayed to God that this son of hers might become famous. The second Johann Strauss was to make up to all of them for the wrongs done by the first.

Study at the Commercial College had ended for Johann when one day he had suddenly burst into song in the middle of a lesson. The professors were exceedingly strict and expelled him. The father, to whom as the boy's guardian this was reported, tried in another way to attach his too-musical son to a life of commerce. He took a private tutor for him who was to prepare Johann for a post in a savings bank.\* That was the bourgeois cage in which this strange father wished to confine young Strauss.

He had reckoned without the mother's tenacity and impassioned will. She managed to have Johann taught to play the violin by Kohlmann, the conductor of the ballet at the Court opera. A little while later, the famous Hofmann took him as a pupil in composition. The great influence however, was exercised on Johann by the ecclesiastical conductor Josef Drexler; apart from his own father this was the first creative musician whom young Strauss had met.

Drexler at that time was sixty years old. He was the son of an

\*This tutor was anything but well adapted for suppressing a love for music; he was the bookkeeper Ludwig Scheyrer who later, in 1850, when Father Strauss was dead, wrote the first comprehensive account (together with Reichmann, the flute-player) of *Johann Strauss' Musical Progression Through Life*.

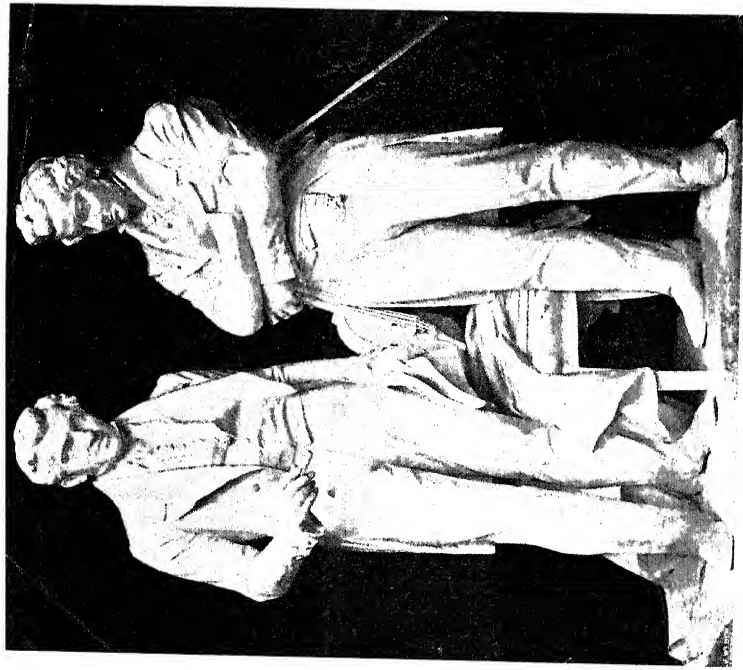


THE SPERL 1830



VOLKSGARTEN 1830





LANNER-STRAUSS MONUMENT  
Vienna



MOTHER ANNA

*Caroline Schumann, 1840*

organist in Bohemia and had lived through part of the great period of classical music. At the age of ten he had been a choir-boy in Passau, later a pupil at the Benedictine monastery, where he had taken lessons in thorough-bass from the famous Grotius. After his philosophical and theological studies, Drexler made an excursion into secular music; for four years he was a conductor in the Viennese Leopoldstadt theater, the popular theater that is bound up with the name of Ferdinand Raimund. The vulgarities of theatrical life, however, and that particular theater was exceedingly coarse, drove Drexler back to a more monastic existence. As an organist with the Servites, as conductor of the Cathedral choir at St. Stephen's Church, he composed offertories and masses. When Johann made his acquaintance, the ecclesiastical composer had abjured secular music altogether. With a smile he remembered that twenty years before he had written the music for Raimund's comedies. This had included the melody for the *Girl from the Land of the Fairies* which today is a well-known popular song:

Brotherkin dear, oh brotherkin dear,  
 You are not angry? I need not fear?  
 The sun that is shining so warmly and bright,  
 Too soon will its glory dissolve in the night!  
 Brotherkin dear, oh brotherkin dear,  
 Our parting is so near, so near.

But ditties and theatrical melodies were not what Drexler taught young Johann. Drexler was ambitious and wished to do for the boy what Abbot Vogler in Darmstadt had once done for C. M. von Weber; so the youth of eighteen had to compose a four-part score, a gradual for choir and orchestra entitled *Tu qui regis totum orbem*. Strauss did not want to compose solemn Church music, but Drexler was something of a tyrant and very proud of his pupil's work; he saw to it that it was completed and even performed in the church Am Hof.

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That was not what Anna Strauss had wanted when she expended the sums saved from her meager budget on the boy's training. Her son was not to become a composer of Church music. It was her fixed intention that Johann the Second should beat Johann the First on his own ground. As a waltz-composer he was to conquer the hearts of the Viennese public, he was to be the new chief of an old family, a pretender to the throne of ancient fame. This coincided with the boy's own wishes, and to Drexler's horror and alarm he would perform roguish tricks on the organ such as playing a series of waltzes in the cool echoing twilight of the church, afterwards assuring his master that "it had been intended for a fugue, but he had somehow slipped."

As a matter of fact Johann had attempted his first waltz at the age of six. Rather clumsy and yet with something strangely intelligent about it is the phrasing which Mother Anna had written down while listening to her little boy's rendering:



As other mothers preserve the first attempts at writing or at painting of their little ones, so this wife of the musician had preserved her baby's first musical attempt; the piano had stood in his grandparent's apartment in Salmansdorf. Twelve years had passed since then and many other waltzes had followed the first

attempt. Strauss had every right to call himself a waltz composer.

But how was he to prove it to the public and how was he to earn money for the family whose income owing to the father's improvidence was steadily decreasing? Emilie Trampusch wasted money and Anna Strauss received less and less.

Johann confided in Drexler. He would always be grateful to him but he could not become an ecclesiastical composer. He had to be a waltz composer and a violinist like his father. That was his true profession. And apart from everything else for the sake of his brothers and sisters he would have to say farewell to canons and fugues. The master, who was seated on the organist's stool, turned briskly round and dismissed him. "Well, then run away and write waltzes like your father. But you would hardly have needed to learn counterpoint for *that*."

This happened in the summer of the year 1844. His parents had been divorced at last. Poverty was knocking at the windows of the Hirschenhaus; Johann Strauss would have to go out immediately and earn money. He was nineteen. Had not the father begun at a much earlier age? Young Johann swelled with ambition and love for his mother. But before he applied to the authorities for a license to play in a restaurant with his own orchestra, he wrote a profoundly moving letter to his father. He revered his father as an artist, and though he could not keep away from music, his father's desire that he should do so did not lessen his filial respect. "My dearly beloved father," he wrote, "Conscious that as a loving son I should not be strong and firm enough to make a good and noble choice in the difficult spiritual conflict of filial love with justice and gratitude I came to the following determination. After having tested all my powers with reference to this decisive step I have determined to devote the talents, the training of which I owe to my own mother, to her; otherwise under existing circumstances she would be unprotected and helpless and I hope that by using my

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feeble powers in my chosen field of work I may be able at least to pay her some small measure of thanks." (His style was in reality still more confused and moreover grammatically incorrect.) The letter reveals the grave spiritual distress from which young Strauss suffered when he wrote it. Courageous as he was, he had reason to tremble before his "old man's" anger, particularly as the latter was not really old at all but had just turned forty that summer. He was at the height of his fame. How would the struggle end?

Johann began by sending his *Tu qui regis totum orbem* to the Viennese magistracy and asking for a license "to make music for entertainment in public resorts with an orchestra of from twelve to fifteen persons." It did not occur to him that his opus was a strange introduction to such a career. The difficulty about the license was his minority. The authorities, lacking the father's consent, might have refused Johann's request out of hand. References from other people were obtained and in these the authorities were assured that the "extremely modest, extremely well-educated youth" Strauss was worthy of the goodwill of the magistracy in his chosen profession on account of his budding talent. One of the referees was Drexler who supported the petition although he was angry with Johann. The cleverest and most effective step was taken by Johann himself when he promised spontaneously that besides dance music he would include concert and operatic music in his programs. This acknowledgment of the claims of classical music procured the license for him.

## THE FIFTEENTH OF OCTOBER

In order to appear before the public as Johann Strauss Junior he had to have an orchestra worthy of his famous name. Strauss made his selection among the unemployed musicians who frequented the inn Zur Stadt Belgrad. He engaged some, trained them, dismissed them again, engaged new ones, all in feverish ex-

citement. He did not wish his father to hear of his début too early, but he could not prevent the news from making the whispering rounds of Vienna. Then the papers took it up and thus increased the agitation of both father and son. In itself there was nothing extraordinary about a new orchestral conductor who was collecting his musicians. It was the personal, the private element that stimulated unhealthy curiosity and almost led to a scandal; the name of Johann Strauss, known wherever the waltz had penetrated, as far away as America and Australia, was to be split up into Johann Strauss Senior and Johann Strauss Junior. That was a real sensation.

On Sunday October 13th, 1844, tall posters and newspaper advertisements in large print proclaimed to the public that "Johann Strauss' Son" would make his appearance on the 15th in Hietzing, in Dommayer's Garden Restaurant, opposite the park of Schönbrunn. This then was the challenge. Until that day the father had not really believed that his son would have the courage to defy him and appear before the public.

Nor was it to be a hole-and-corner affair. The début was to take place in the elegant western quarter of Vienna in which the Emperor's summer palace was situated. Johann the Elder was profoundly depressed. On the Sunday evening he told Tobias Haslinger that he hoped he would not live to see that Tuesday. The jealousy that tore him apart seemed exaggerated to Haslinger and Hirsch. And yet their fears for the father, particularly his health, made them antagonistic to the son's venture.

The week before the posters came out, Hirsch had played the part of a loyal spy, had driven around to all sorts of places, and partly by persuasion and partly by threats of a boycott, had extracted promises that Strauss' son would not be allowed to appear. In the case of the Sperl and some other important resorts he had been successful in his campaign, but not in the case of Dommayer. This he now realized and it made him exceedingly angry. He en-

gaged a band of followers without quite knowing what he wanted them to do.

Young Strauss and his adherents were not feeling too happy either. Good friends had warned Johann against this first appearance. It was not the fact that he had to train fifteen members of an orchestra in an exceedingly short time that worried them, but the boy's apparent lack of a repertoire. People required a conductor to play something of his own and young Johann Strauss, overwhelmed with technical matters, had hardly had time to compose anything for his opening night.

"Well, at least I have four waltzes, three polkas and two quadrilles," he replied ironically, but this did not reassure his doubting friends.

On Monday October 14th, groups clustered around the posters in Vienna as if they were proclamations of supreme political importance. "Invitation to a Soirée Dansante . . . even in unfavorable weather . . . Johann Strauss (Son) will have the honor to conduct his own orchestra . . . First appearance . . . In addition to overtures and opera melodies, several of *his own compositions* . . . Johann Strauss Junior respectfully commends himself to the grace and favor of the public. Entrance tickets in advance 30 kreuzer, at the box office 50 kreuzer . . . From 6 p.m." Many people, reading this, objected to it on commercial grounds. What possessed the lad to expose himself to the radiance illuminating the famous name, just as if he and his father were identical? People with legal training prophesied that the concert would probably not take place at all; the words "Son" or "Junior" were printed so small that the intention to deceive was quite obvious. The boy simply wanted to earn money by his father's name. It was a positive swindle. Others argued just as heatedly in favor of Johann the son. Everybody knew how the elder Strauss treated his family, and now the boy had to fiddle for the money that his father's mistress wasted. The wisest gossipers

said that the only thing that mattered was whether young Strauss had talent or not. Nothing else counted.

On the Tuesday from four p.m. onwards, the setting autumn sun looked down on a veritable migration of peoples; in carriages and on foot the population of Vienna streamed down the Mariahilferstrasse towards the west, towards Hietzing. Dommayer's Casino would never be able to accommodate all these thousands. They would have to watch from outside, like a chorus, crowded against the walls encircling the park of Schönbrunn, while within the newcomer was fighting for the favor of the masses. A gigantic scandal hovered in the air. In the procession of carriages a few fiacres had been seen containing the employees and followers of the publisher Pietro Mechetti, whose sympathies were with Junior. From the other side, the men hired by Haslinger as adherents of the elder Strauss obtained admittance to the garden in a body. "There is old Lamp-Hirsch," someone cried out suddenly. This was a nick-name given to Carl Friedrich Hirsch because of his work as director of illuminations for Johann the Elder. These duties he executed very efficiently in addition to those he had assumed as financial manager.

Ever-increasing crowds squeezed themselves into the hall. The stewards had ceased to function long before. At first the money was thrown into the box office over the heads of those in front. Then that ceased. The box office was closed and people just pushed in from outside. It was clear that nobody would be able to dance. The *soirée dansante* would become a "standing concert" for many thousands of people. "It was more difficult"—this was Wiest the next day in an article in the *Wanderer*—"to secure a table than to obtain a seat in the English House of Lords." But nobody thought about settling down at a table.

Finally there appeared the hero of the day, Johann Strauss Junior with his fiddle. A good-looking man combining the peculi-



arities of both his parents. Though he had not inherited his father's obstinate forehead, his face showed the latter's musical talent. His large darkly gleaming eyes were a heritage from his mother, as were his slightly prominent chin and the exuberant hair which lay on his head in feminine waves; his pallor was inherited from his father. From him too he derived the graceful gestures of the lower part of his arm, the way he held his bow with the tips of his fingers, and also the swift energetic bowing which contrasted with the nonchalance of his posture.

"Yes, he has arrived—the son of Strauss," Wiest wrote the next day. "He is met by a tempest, but Strauss seems to stand firmly on his feet, the tempest does not upset him, on the contrary it elevates him. The similarity to his father in his facial expression is acclaimed with applause; now he swings his bow, now he starts to play; one, two, three strokes and electric shocks run through our bodies; and now the man facing us sprays sparks as from a galvanic battery; and now a voice calls through the halls acclaiming him as the worthy son of his father. It is seldom that paternal talents are inherited by sons, but of the son of Strauss it can be truly said that he came to earth as a waltz."

Wiest, who was a good journalist, chose the language of mediation and compromise. In actual fact, things happened differently. When Strauss Junior mounted the platform, furious protests echoed by groups of partisans were shouted at him. Haslinger and his men had planted themselves in front of the orchestra. Only the fact that Strauss was playing a very effective number and one extraordinarily popular in Vienna achieved silence. It was the overture to *La Muette de Portici* by Auber, the same Auber who in Paris had thrown bouquets of violets at the elder Strauss. The boy played with precision. He could certainly conduct, could he compose as well?

The second item was the important one. It consisted of waltzes of his own composition with the significant title *Die Gunstwerber* (Wooers of Favor). Originally they had been called *Das Mutterherz*, but clever Anna Strauss had thought the implied dedication both too sentimental and too hostile to the father. A certain danger lay in this which did not suit her. So she simply altered the title to *Die Gunstwerber*. "As if singing had broken out from all three storeys of the house . . . the same charm, the same modest *piano*, the same reverberating *forte* as the father. Basses rumble, intermediate parts woo, and the main violin theme vibrates across to the ladies," writes Ernst Decsey. Fifty years of the greatest influence ever attained by a musician began at that moment.

The protests died down, *Die Gunstwerber* had to be repeated four times, a smile lit up the thin, serious face with the glowing eyes. A short pause, then the young conductor plunged with his orchestra into the *Herzenslust Polka*. Three times it was repeated, then Johann Strauss played the *Début Quadrille*. The protests ceased altogether. Tobias Haslinger's followers were silent. When the program came to its appointed end with the *Sinngedicht Walzer* the crowds forced the players to repeat it nineteen times. That had never happened before; not even at a Strauss concert.

The poet Johann Nepomuk Vogl, the influential reporter of the *Oesterreichisches Morgenblatt* had left the hall after the *Gunstwerber* because he "found intolerable the constant scuffling for hours on end in that heat, because he could not allow himself to be pushed and trodden on and to risk having to go to bed without supper." In spite of all this discomfort, he recorded with enthusiasm that the talent of Johann Strauss the Elder had been transmitted to the Younger. Wiest, who found the nineteen repetitions of the *Sinngedicht* more than he could bear, also took his leave, perspiring freely. But not without "admiring the strange endur-

ance and physical strength of this young man." Fiddling as understood by the Strausses was a great exertion. This was what Laube had meant when he compared the elder Johann Strauss to a general in the field. The son, younger by twenty years, was not superior to his father, but Wiest rightly observed that the father at the age of twenty had not had the same resources, had not had such knowledge of orchestration as the son now possessed.

While the critic was making his notes he was being conveyed in a comfortable carriage along the now deserted Mariahilferstrasse. The carriage turned off towards the district of Gumpendorf. At the corner stood the little house in which Lanner had lived. Lanner had now been dead a year. Wiest had been present when they bore him to his grave. Johann Strauss, too, and Philip Fahrbach had followed the coffin with their orchestra. "I looked up to the windows—everything was dark and quiet as the grave. In that house there once lived a Viennese who composed quite good waltzes too. Good-night, Lanner. Good evening, Father Strauss. Good morning, Son Strauss."

While Wiest was driving home and preparing to announce the fame of the new star in his newspaper, the Viennese crowds remained immovable and indomitable in Dommayer's overheated casino. And then, it was one o'clock in the morning, much-fêted Junior stood up in front of his orchestra and with his bow commanded silence. What he did next revealed his innate nobility, the knightly traits in him. After a brief instruction to his orchestra, there resounded something that was not on the program—his father's most famous waltz, the prelude to the *Loreley-Rhein-klänge*. Deeply moved, the audience held its breath. With the last note the father's followers, now his own, pushed their way to the platform, took Strauss Junior on to their shoulders and carried him away. Following them with tears in his eyes, clapping and shout-

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ing came Carl Friedrich Hirsch, "Lamp-Hirsch," who had intended to create a disturbance. Over and over again he pressed the hands of Johann's overjoyed mother who had been sitting silent in a corner of the hall, unrecognized by the thousands. Then he sent for a carriage to drive him to the father's headquarters, the Sperl, where he had promised to report.

He reported that Vienna now possessed two musicians of the name of Strauss and that for good or evil everybody would have to realize it.



## 6

*Eighteen Hundred Forty-Eight*

*What? I? I am to espouse the cause of some particular form of the State—why should I? Can the King paint my pictures, or the Republic mix my colors? Their claim that I should serve them only incommodes me and steals my time—in so far as it does not actually threaten my life.*

ZUNIGA Y CAMPOS

## THE EPOCH OF MARCHES

“When the music stops, the individual seems to drop out of the world,” Reichardt had written in 1809. And as in Vienna there was nothing but waltz music, the play and the whole life of the people were governed by a kind of metre; they moved in an “immense continuous tonal poem.” In the same year, Goethe’s contemporary Zelter had written, “It is easy to see here why the people are not political. They want to live every minute. Politics come from boredom . . .” Goethe and Zelter would have been astonished if they could have seen “rotating Vienna” in the February of that wild year of 1848. Vienna abandoned the waltz and suddenly became political.

For years there had been an obscure feeling in the Austrian

monarchy that things could not continue as they were. The final victory over Napoleon a generation before had not filled the pockets that had been so thoroughly emptied during the twenty years' war. The State bankruptcy, the great devaluation of the gulden in the year 1811, had taken such toll from the bourgeoisie that it had never recovered; it had no desire to perpetuate the existing state of affairs. And as for the very considerable numbers of industrial workers, they were strongly influenced by western models and were even more ready for an explosion. When in Paris, in February, the civilian rule of Louis Philippe broke down without a single blow having been struck, the military monarchy of the Habsburgs and their aristocratic families began to slip downhill too. In March the revolution broke out.

It was inflamed not so much by the social as by the national question. Since the Napoleonic epoch the peoples of the monarchy, those many-tongued inhabitants of the supernational house, had occupied themselves with national self-investigation and strengthened their national consciousness. The Hungarians wished to live in a Hungarian way, the Poles in a Polish way, and the Bohemians as Bohemians; the wish of the Germans to live in a German way was no less strong. The tendencies which in 1918 tore the immense Empire apart showed themselves seventy years earlier in their first explosive violence. On March 3rd, 1848, Ludwig Kossuth, the Hungarian, made a speech in Pressburg. The immediate result was the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution. A week later Vienna followed.

Not unaware of these tendencies, but strangely powerless to stem them was the supreme bureaucracy with the Chancellor, Prince Clemens Metternich, at its head. Since the death of Franz II, he had had sole responsibility. Ferdinand "the Good-Natured" who had succeeded Franz, was a weakling whose power of decision was

enfeebled through his severe physical sufferings. As long as possible, Metternich had repressed all national aspirations by means that made him hated throughout the country. An overgrown police force had its spies everywhere and regulated everything; in the end everybody watched everybody else. But when matters became serious Metternich recoiled from the hydra-headed revolution. Democracy and nationalism were too strong for the veteran snake-charmer. He fled. At first to southern Germany, where he hid himself in the house of the poet-doctor Justinus Kerner in the little village of Weinsberg, playing the violin and making wild speeches. Kerner reports that the Chancellor even wanted him to promise that if the rebels came he would hoist the red flag of revolution on the sanatorium. When South Germany grew dangerous, Metternich once more took to flight, this time to London. The Vienna and the Austria he left behind him were thoroughly ablaze.

In that year of terror, cursed by some and praised by others, the nations ceased dancing and took to marching instead. The Germans abandoned their waltz, the Bohemians the polka, and the Poles their mazurka. Music naturally followed suit.

When the super-national Habsburg monarchy, paralyzed at first, finally pulled itself together and determined to use force, it was to music that swords were drawn—the music of the Radetzky March.

The joy in tonal expression felt by a supremely musical people could not be repressed even by armaments. They needed marches and the one-time waltz composers provided them. This lasted for at least ten years after the revolution. As till then significant events had been commemorated in waltzes, so now every important occasion brought forth its own particular march. In 1853, the Emperor Franz Josef, then still a young man, was stabbed by a tailor's knife while inspecting his troops; the assailant was immediately



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disarmed by a civilian named Ettenreich, and an adjutant O'Donnell. Immediately afterwards the military conductor Philip Fährbach produced his O'Donnell March. It was the epoch of marches.

### THE DEMON OF MILITARY MUSIC

*"La musique militaire,"* says Madame de Staël in one of her books, *"le hennissement des chevaux, cette foule des soldats revêtus des mêmes couleurs, émus par le même désir, font éprouver une émotion qui triomphe de l'instinct conservateur."* Even dance music has its demon. An inexplicable force urges the people possessed by it to the summit of life. But still greater is its brother, the demon of military music. It leads the people straight away to death and deadens their perceptions. Military music destroys the fear of death.

Looked at closely, a march is nothing but a muscular aid to troops on the move. A straightforward two-beat time indicating "left-right left-right" formed the rhythmic skeleton of this utilitarian music of motion. Till the fifteenth century it was executed by drums and fifes, the only instruments that man cannot imitate by his voice. Fifes and percussion instruments are partly inhuman, partly extra-human. The darkly rumbling tones of the one and the shrill noise of the other extinguish human feeling. Their music cries to the mercenaries: "Do not think! Kill! March!"

At the turn of the sixteenth to the seventeenth century when the soldier was beginning to be more thoughtful and more conscious of himself, trumpets and horns were added to the more primitive instruments. The body of a march was subjected to a division. A great artistic difference was felt between music appropriate to infantry and that intended for cavalry. A march for infantry had to remember that man has two feet; cavalry music had to take into consideration that the horse has four feet and an irregular gait.

Most of the cavalry marches of that time were composed for a light trot; in the *Finnlandischer Reitermarsch* of the Thirty Years' War one can hear not only the hooves touching the ground and the beat signifying the regular contact of heavy human bodies with the saddle, one even seems to see the playful oscillation of the reins.

The most beautiful marches were composed in the eighteenth century, in the period of the minuet, when the Empress Maria Theresa and the Prussian King Friedrich were engaged in their epoch-making struggle for German supremacy. The march of the eighteenth century is the brother of the minuet, and like it is a product of thoughtfulness, grace and self-controlled logic. The *Hohenfriedberger Marsch* composed by Friedrich II himself is a good example of a slow infantry march. The first bars call up before our eyes a column in close formation climbing up rising ground, unseen by the enemy. On reaching the highest point of the rise, the Prussians carry out a maneuver. While some of the soldiers mark time, the strategical formation opens out to left and right, defiles in a long line down into the valley and takes the enemy by surprise. Even before the enemy lines are actually reached, the Prussian attack has a triumphant note.

With the Austrians military music was never quite a product of "chess-board and barracks," as has been said of Prussian marches. It was closely allied to village dancing. How unconfined is Schubert's Military March, that great *Impromptu über eine marschierende Truppe*. The bands of the various Austrian regiments always had a good deal of the popular, the free, the fiery about them. Not only did numerous Bohemians, Croats and Hungarians serve in the Habsburg army, but there was also an Italian admixture; and it was this, the Venetian temperament, that lent Austrian military music its burlesque tone. Austrian marches have an element of the *Carnival of Death*. Anyone who saw a march-past of regiments

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in Vienna before 1914 will remember, as if it had been a gay, popular festival, the delight of the Viennese onlookers when a tiny pony would pass drawing a carriage with an enormous kettle-drum; or when a military orchestra-conductor, the ends of his enormous moustache standing erect, would thump thunderously on the drum. In the forties General Haynau had the bombardon of his regiment fashioned in the form of a crocodile and then carried through the streets. This intentional clowning was the gay adjunct of a will to victory which saw in battle a kind of dare-devil carnival. But there was virility also to be expressed, as is clearly seen in the inimitable Radetzky march, composed by the elder Johann Strauss.

Johann Strauss came into contact with the military because he was a member of the civil militia. Vienna had two municipal regiments which were called on in times of emergency. Otherwise they only came out when there was a festival. In Austria the arming of the people in peace time was a game of no importance; but in war it was a very serious matter. The Viennese Civic Militia had first acquired a European reputation in the nineties when Napoleon was in Styria and was preparing to march against Vienna. At that time Beethoven, at the age of twenty-six, was the regimental orchestra-conductor of the Civilian Militia. He wrote a song designed to arouse enthusiasm for the departure of the volunteers and also a march. But this did not hinder him—less than a year later when the Austrians had been defeated—from visiting Bernadotte, the French Minister in Vienna almost daily, and discussing republics with him. It is important to be clear about this. It is not that a great artist is to be bought, but, on the contrary, these inconsistencies occur because enthusiasm is the breath of an artist's life, and political ideals in themselves are not stable enough to enslave in permanency a genius intoxicated by form.

After the Napoleonic wars, the Civilian Militia became nothing

more than an affair of parades. And in any case, the cautious Emperor Franz would not have allowed it to take part in anything but spectacles and processions. The Mayor of the city of Vienna had the rank of a colonel in the Militia and his counsellors were officers. The less important this was in reality, the more care was taken to flatter the vanity of the troops. They had magnificent uniforms.

The elder Johann Strauss was appointed orchestra-conductor to the first civilian regiment in 1843, Joseph Lanner to the second. Lanner, who was of a retiring nature and could not have killed a fly, had a military funeral. The second civilian regiment marched ahead in the funeral procession, then followed the band of the first regiment under Johann Strauss. The coffin, on which lay the musician's hat and sword, was carried by soldiers; then came a civilian company with guns. Even the civilian artillery sent a deputation. The rear was brought up by Fahrbach with his band of Viennese Academic Musicians.

These details show that Vienna was the German city in which the medieval guilds survived later than elsewhere. As long as possible these guilds made their own music—an incitement to the military not to be behindhand in quality. The first to transfer himself to the imperial army was Fahrbach himself who thereafter for many years conducted the orchestra of the infantry regiment *Hoch und Deutschmeister*. Under his successors Komzak and Ziehrer it was clearly observable that dancing and marching, the elements of ancient Viennese popular music, became more and more bacchantic and yet more tragic. Right up to the very edge of the great war, up to the year 1914, Vienna and Austria presented the world with the most beautiful waltzes and the most beautiful marches. Intoxicated and wearied by both, the old Empire finally sank into the abyss.

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### FATHER AND SON DIFFER

A new apple of discord was soon thrown into the ambitious Strauss family when, after Lanner's death, Johann the Younger was entrusted with the post of orchestral conductor of the Second Regiment. The somewhat malicious and very inquisitive Viennese population were able to watch father and son facing each other in open squares, each with his own troops. One gave his concerts in a red, the other in a blue uniform. There had of course been no lack of attempts to bring about a reconciliation between the two. According to family tradition, the Elder had in 1846 offered the Younger the post of his father's representative in the old Strauss orchestra. Young Johann commanded his own orchestra and moreover he had to make a living for a mother whom he loved. And so father and son lived icily side by side, as for decades Strauss and Lanner had lived. Then came 1848, the year of the German revolution, and this divided father and son for ever.

For Johann the Younger the great event of the March revolution opened to the sound of an operetta. Though he had not inherited his father's love of traveling, yet just at that time he happened to be in Bucharest, giving a concert with his orchestra. A telegram brought him the news of the revolution. In his luggage he had his uniform as first conductor of the orchestra of the Second Civilian Regiment: a blue coat with white cuffs, a tall shako with a white plume. This splendid uniform had already accomplished all kinds of miracles on the way to Rumania; thus in Belgrade (then still Turkish) the Pasha in Residence had believed that Johann Strauss was a high dignitary and had received him with janizary music and military honors. Here again in Buda-Pesth the beautiful uniform deceived resident Austrians as to his rank. They had a long-standing quarrel with a Consul-General in the city—probably a question of fees or some other trifling matter. But the

news of the revolution in Vienna heated people's tempers. The Consul had a name as a reactionary. Johann Strauss was persuaded to force his way into the Legation at the head of a number of followers and to compel the Consul with drawn sword to resign immediately. Incredible to state he actually did it. Fired by the champagne of excitement, Strauss and his men attacked the Consul's bodyguard; this was not made up of Austrians alone, but included some sturdy Rumanian peasants. The Consul was forced to declare his resignation, but in the general fisticuffs that ensued, the attackers were finally thrown out of the house. The plume from Strauss' shako was left behind in the hand of one of the servants and was later a police exhibit. As a disturber of domestic peace Strauss had to leave the country immediately. At the same time a report addressed to Metternich in person was sent to Vienna relating what had passed. Metternich however had other things to do than to concern himself with excesses that had taken place in Bucharest; the Viennese events were nearer to hand. And so it happened that young Strauss arrived in Vienna unmolested and was able to boast proudly of his heroic deeds in Rumania.

The democrats, who had long had their eye on the younger Strauss, whose sentiments were quite different from those of his reactionary father, were pleased when he applied for the post of First Conductor of the orchestra of the newly-founded National Guard. The civilian regiments had been merged into the popular Militia immediately after the March uprising. Young Strauss was not an officer; in order to become musical conductor he had first to enter as an ordinary guardsman, to learn to shoot and to keep watch, like any other man of the people.

On August 22nd it was particularly hot. Guardsman Strauss in a very bad temper was keeping watch with some others on the Karmeliterplatz. Suddenly an alarm-courier brought the news that an unorganized workers' revolt had broken out and that the Na-

tional Guard was to proceed against it. The drummer and two other men departed to call out the members of the Guard in the Leopoldstadt. Johann Strauss remained alone. As in the first place he was exceedingly hot, in the second place very bored, and in the third was convinced that as a single guard he would in no case be able to check the workers, he leaned his gun against a neighboring house and went away. He went straight to the Hirschenhaus in the neighboring Taborstrasse to visit his mother whom he had not seen for several days. He had a meal and composed some music. Both these things now seemed to him more important than the whole revolution.

It seemed that Strauss could not tolerate boredom. Even during the revolution he did not avoid society; as soon as he had his conductor's baton with him and not a gun, he would take his guards' orchestra and repair with enthusiasm to the barricades. Bullets flew, dead and wounded were carried past him. He took no notice, but with flaming eyes played the *Marseillaise*. As his father had played *God Save the Queen* at the English Coronation so Johann the Younger played the *Marseillaise* undismayed in those dark October days. Between its repetitions he would play his own pieces, the *Freiheits-und Barrikadenlieder* his *Spottpolka gegen die Ligurianer* and above all his *Revolutionsmarsch*. If he had been killed then, he would hardly have died for the revolution, but rather for his own enthusiasms and for music.

Meanwhile tragedy had descended on Vienna. After the murder of the War Minister, Latour, who had fallen defenseless into the hands of a raging mob, an army under Windischgrätz had surrounded the unfortunate city and begun to bombard it. In the night before October 30th, part of the Leopoldstadt was burnt down. With many other families Anna Strauss and her daughters had fled to a neighboring convent. She was anxious about her sons, and with good reason. Like Johann, Josef had been carried away

by the waves of the revolution. He was a member of the Student Corps and for days there had been no news of him. Only little Eduard was with his mother. He was thirteen at the time and with no signs of fear would help the monks carry the corpses of the dead from the street into the convent. Passing the night on a mattress, the fugitive women could read the hours from the clock on the church tower, so bright were the flames from the burning Leopoldstadt. Doubtless the mother believed that the Hirschenhaus was on fire with everything that she possessed. She could hear the crashes and the crackling from the Jägerzeile, from the streets and buildings lying next to the Tabor Bridge. The Odeon hall in the Zirkusgasse, one of the greatest dance halls in Europe, was burnt to the ground. It had been set on fire by the Polish infantry of General Frank because they had been told that democratic meetings had been held there. With the same right, however, the whole of Vienna could have been set alight, as there is no question but that nearly all her inhabitants were in sympathy with the revolution, which was at first very successful. Strangely enough a large part of the population managed to combine this attitude with sympathy for the Emperor. People were sorry for Ferdinand's fate, he had harmed no one. When the neurotic man with his bowed head and his good-natured eyes drove through the streets, the people literally wept. "This ought to have happened to old Franz," one laborer said to Hebbel, the German poet, who was quietly wandering through the streets of Vienna making his observations.

When the conflagration died down, mother Strauss left the convent. Would she find the Hirschenhaus still standing? Hardly had she entered her apartment when the maid ran screaming into the room, behind her a corporal and four Polish grenadiers with fixed bayonets. The corporal, who spoke no word of German but who had perhaps heard that a man belonging to the Student Legion had his home in that apartment, screamed at the mother, "Student-



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sky?" Anna Strauss shook her head. A soldier tore open all the cupboards, but Josef's uniform as a Legionary which he had already doffed, was hanging unseen up the chimney. There, too, were hidden three guns, one of which belonged to Josef. If they had been found, the reactionary soldiers would have torn Frau Strauss to pieces. As it was, the Polish corporal was induced by a few pieces of silver to go his way and give up the hunt.

Shortly afterwards Vienna surrendered. The leaders who had defended it, Messenhauser and Robert Blum, were condemned to death by court martial and shot. And with them fell two musicians, Dr. Alfred Julius Becher and Dr. Hermann Jellinek. Becher, the son of Rhenish parents, born in Manchester and originally a British citizen, was a typical Protestant who did not feel at home in Vienna, and had a particularly large number of opponents. He had keen intelligence and was entirely incorruptible; Richard Wagner, who knew him, considered him the most eminent and the profoundest critic in Vienna. In his paper *Der Radikale* Becher had sided with the people; and now he died like his collaborator, Dr. Herman Jellinek, the brother of the famous Rabbi. Jellinek was only twenty-five and had hardly begun to live. He tried to enter into a discussion and to explain to the men with the guns "that it was impossible to blow out the life of a man just because he was the author of an article which was intended to enlighten the people concerning rights and duties in a constitutional State." But it is in the nature of guns, once they are pointed, not to listen to argument. The sound of this executionary salvo echoed through the whole of Europe and awakened loathing.

## THE RADETSKY MARCH

All these dreadful things happened in November.

It had been different in the summer when Vienna had won the

first part of the revolution and had not yet lost the second. Then she had been resting between battles and enjoying the sight of processions under the bright August sun. The shots occasionally heard might almost have been fireworks.

Best of all was the news of the victories over the Italians gained by Radetzky, that very old and popular general. It was illogical of the Viennese to rejoice at these victories, as Radetzky commanded, not the army of republican Vienna, but that of the Habsburgs. Sentiment however is not logical and a number of Viennese were serving in the army. In this matter the Republicans and the "Emperor's Own" felt alike. The "Black-Red Golden Hearts" and the "Black-Yellow Hearts" beat equally high when celebrating the victors. Vienna was in the hands of the people and Radetzky, the army and Italy were a long way off.

Such was the atmosphere when the *Radetzky March* burst on Vienna. It was to become immortal, but it was quite inappropriate to the times. One August evening when red clouds were spinning wreaths in the west, Johann the Elder was playing in the Wasser-glacis, in what is today the Municipal Park. This was the haunt of the reactionaries in Republican Vienna, of officers in mufti and supporters of the monarchy. Strauss' sons were republicans, but he himself belonged to the old order of things. He was only forty-four, but he considered himself old and in his resentment of the ingratitude of youth and his attachment to Austria as she had been, his heart went out to Radetzky. He gave the signal to begin:



Unsentimental and almost comical in effect, this theme fires the blood like pepper. It has something familiar about it. Is it not, apart from its grace notes and flourishes, the reverse of the *Tyro-*

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*lienne* from Rossini's *Overture to William Tell*? The eight-bar E major motif from *Tell*:



is contracted and unconsciously parodied in the D major melody of the *Radetzky*. The principal phrase is hurried, almost unregulated; it sounds more like the clatter of cooking utensils than the thunder of guns and bayonets. It is too gay to be the music of attack; it must be the music of impending victory. The follow-up turns to the sub-dominant:



but only to reach the principal key again a moment later. Drunk with triumph, the Generalissimo's battalions hurl themselves down into Lombardy. They are close on the heels of the fleeing troops of Karl Albert, the King of Sardinia. And then comes a new phase of the march to accompany the victorious troops:



A different sun shines down on this, a memory of Vienna, a lingering trace of the feel of girls' arms; scraps of a dance song with a backward glance at three-quarter time. But on they go, still onwards. Infantry and cavalry are striving forwards. There are no more shots, there is laughter. The trio follows. The A major, the super-dominant is hoisted as if it were a flag:



## EIGHTEEN HUNDRED FORTY-EIGHT

Mordents like stray bullets revive the memory of the chromatic grace-notes of the first theme. The trio changes and again the music carries a hint of the waltz. Downwards sway the phrases in sixths:



Finally comes the return to the principal theme with the laurels and gaiety of victory.

The *Radetzky* march is the gift of a century. It will remain as an expression of vitality when perhaps the elder Strauss' waltzes are no longer comprehensible to anyone. The *Radetzky* march will always retain its value as marking an epoch.

## FARE THEE WELL, THOU SILENT HOUSE!

Developments were on the side of the *Radetzky March* and not of revolutionary youth. The town was taken by the "Black-Yellows" and Vienna mourned her corpses. Many sons had fallen as "Black-Red-Golden" Republicans in battle, or had been shot by a firing party. There might still be terrors to come. From Hungary came the reflection of the flames of a terrible Civil War.

It was not pleasant for Strauss to have written the *Radetzky March*. It stamped him politically and ranged him with the victors. At the time of its composition there had been no thought of scaffolds or of the firing squads. It was a tribute to the victorious army. But now Johann the Elder was identified with the reactionaries and he became the recipient of threatening letters.

His sense of equilibrium was disturbed. He wanted to leave the city in which nobody played waltzes any more, in which the joy of life had deteriorated and in which the carnival spirit had been trampled to death by the soldiers. He went to Prague. In the evening he was serenaded in the hotel with caterwaulings. Strauss had

not realized that the Bohemians who had fought against Habsburg would be resentful of his "Black-Yellow" attitude and the *Radetzky March*. His concert the next day was applauded, but there was a certain amount of protest too, although he had omitted from the program everything which might have been considered provocative. Deeply depressed he returned to Vienna, but a few weeks later he went away again.

Misinterpreting the political situation, he sought refuge in Germany. In Munich he was applauded for the sake of old times, but everywhere else he was received with hostility. Though his men wore characteristically broad-brimmed old German hats and some of them even flaunted the black-red-gold cockade, this could not eradicate the memory of the anti-revolutionary *Radetzky March*. Demonstrations were organized against Strauss and his orchestra in Heilbronn, in Heidelberg and most riotously of all in Frankfurt, the city of the German National Assembly. Here his audience shouted the name of Berlioz at him and demanded the *Rákoczy March*, which Berlioz had written in honor of the heroes of the popular uprising in Hungary. Strauss, remembering the triumph Berlioz had prepared for him in Paris ten years before, was in despair. He realized the havoc politics had wrought in the arts. He played neither the *Rákoczy March* nor the *Radetzky March*. Like a thing pursued he fled down the Rhine.

His first laugh rang out when, Aix having been left behind, the wind blew a few of the old-German hats out of an open window. The rest were taken away by the police in Brussels who refused to allow men with such head-dresses to mount a platform in Belgium. "Thank heaven that we are rid of them," said Strauss from the bottom of his heart. The struggles of the past year, particularly the quarrel with his sons, had made a weary man of him. What concern had he with politics? He wanted to make music and nothing else, and so he sought a less volcanic soil. Belgium seemed

none too safe, but England offered a haven. Ten years before he had been so active and so happy there.

On April 21st he again trod on English soil. The first person whom he visited in London was Prince Clemens Metternich, who with his wife and daughter received him in the garden of the Embassy. The Chancellor of State who had fled from Vienna, the outlaw who had been sacrificed, received Strauss in silence. But the ladies burst into tears when they recognized the celebrated composer. They whispered "Vienna"; Strauss, overcome by memories, turned away and buried his face in his hands.

Queen Victoria and the Court received Strauss, and the Tories grasped every opportunity of showering flattering distinctions on him. But the Liberals held back. Their sympathies were with the republicans. As it had been in Vienna and Prague, when Strauss came home at night, he would find threatening letters. The world had become incurably political. All this undermined the musician's health.

Had Strauss forgotten that the English climate did not agree with him? This time its ill effects began in the summer. He wrote depressed letters home, to close friends and to Emilie, prophesying that this would be his last journey. Shortly before his return, a great honor was conferred on him: the Duchesses of Gloucester, Cambridge and Mecklenburg-Strelitz personally undertook the sale of the tickets for his benefit concert. Success, which had fluctuated owing to the hostile attitude of the Liberals, was now assured. With moist eyes the conductor bowed his thanks to the ladies. On his return journey down the Thames, some members of the highest society accompanied him in little boats, while his orchestra sang the melancholy melody from Raimund's *Alpenkönig*: "*So Fare Thee Well Thou Silent House.*"

On July 15th Strauss gave his first concert in Vienna since he had fled from his home. If in his darkest hours he had believed

that politics had dethroned him, he had been mistaken. Thousands of people were present. Just as he was about to begin the Overture to *Maritana*, his bow snapped. He swayed, reached for his neighbor's bow and played the concert to an end. But the incident worried him. He looked on it as an evil omen.

In the following weeks he forgot his presentiments and enjoyed his life. He even forgot that he had promised himself that he would never again meddle with politics, and he composed the *Jellachich March*. This was an act of homage to the "ugliest of the victors," to the Croat Jellachich, who "wanted to clap the whole of German Vienna in the lunatic asylum" and had boasted "that he would sign with his sword the peace dictates for those who wore Black-Red-Gold." Strauss can hardly have known what he was doing when he dedicated a march to him. For Jellachich was not a Radetzky, he was not the father of an army respected even by his opponents.

Radetzky came back from Italy. A banquet had been planned for September 22nd. Strauss, the man of the Radetzky march, was to take over the music. And then, one day before the scheduled date, he broke down as if struck by lightning. He had contracted scarlet fever. One of his and Emilie's five children had carried the infection home from school. It was a severe case and the efforts of doctors Innhauser and Raimann to save Strauss were in vain. The illness was complicated by an inflammation of the brain.

Four days later Strauss was dead.

Anna Strauss, who had known nothing of his illness, did not learn of the death of her divorced husband till a few hours later. A market-runner brought her the news. She sent her second son Josef from the Hirschenhaus to the Kumpfgasse. Josef found the poor corpse all alone, almost naked, lying on the floor on wooden laths which had been taken out of his bed. Sheets and pillows had

disappeared and there was indescribable disorder in the room, as if a murder and robbery had taken place. Emilie Trampusch, in wild terror at the death of her companion, had packed and fled with her children from the apartment.

At first the Viennese would not believe that Johann Strauss was dead. The rumor was received with doubts, but when the news was confirmed mourning and deepest sorrow supervened. Suddenly the phrase "palace and hovel" became reality. All classes mourned Strauss; even those who had been his political enemies, those who had been separated from him only a year before by streams of blood. To say that a monarch in the realm of tonal art was dead is not enough. To the masses Johann Strauss meant much more than that. He was so intimately bound up with them that when he died they felt as if they had been deprived of a vital part of themselves.

"Anna Strauss, née Streim, herewith announces in her own name and that of her children Johann, Josef, Anna, Theresia, and Eduard, the death of her dearly-loved husband . . ." Thus the obituary notice united the spouses as their lives had not succeeded in doing. For now, in the interest of her sons and daughters, the surviving wife laid claim to everything that concerned Johann Strauss.

Two days later, on Thursday, September 27th, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the coffin was carried out of the house in the Kumpfgasse. In the narrow Singerstrasse through which, led by the priests, the funeral procession wended its way, the people stood tightly wedged in their thousands. Silent weeping women looked down from open balconies. The long human serpent swept round the corner of the Stefansplatz, through the immense door into the Cathedral. Members of the orchestra carried the coffin. Behind it paced Amon, the leading violinist; on a black cushion he carried the dead master's violin, its torn strings hanging down.



## JOHANN STRAUSS THE ELDER

All the altars were illuminated, the consecration of the corpse took place by the soft flickering light of torches. The organ pealed and the choir sang. Then the coffin, covered with a cloth, was lifted on to a magnificent hearse drawn by four black horses. Down the Graben and the Schottengasse it went at a foot pace to the Schottentor, where the members of the orchestra once more took over the coffin and carrying it on their shoulders in turns brought it to its resting-place in Döbling. Behind the mourners paced the band of the infantry regiment Ceccopieri under conductor Reznicek, and behind them the band of the second artillery regiment under Reinisch. They played funeral marches composed by Tobias Haslinger and Fahrbach. Side by side with Josef Lanner, Johann Strauss was given to the earth. The Men's Choral Association sang in unison while the mound gradually began to rise over the grave. Darkness fell and the air grew chilly. A sweetly bitter autumnal odor came from the neighboring vineyards where the grapes were waiting to be harvested. Lonely and sad came the sound of the bell from Salmansdorf. Johann Strauss had presented it. The thin volume of its receding notes accompanied the people as they returned home.

Eduard Bauernfeld, whose political sympathies were with the abortive revolution, nevertheless dedicated heartfelt verses to the memory of Johann Strauss:

Poor Vienna! Now the gods  
Have ceased to love you, for they've taken  
Your own Strauss, your best-beloved,  
Your last comfort and your fame.

Right it is that streets are crowded,  
That the funeral bells are tolling,  
That his artist brothers sadly  
Bear their master's earthly shell.

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED FORTY-EIGHT

All that sings, rejoicing, springing,  
All the harmless merry laughter,  
All we mean by old Vienna—  
We are bearing to its rest.

Deck the mound with which it's covered  
Always with the freshest flowers,  
And engrave upon the headstone  
"All our life is but a dance."



*Book Two*

*Johann the Younger*  
*and His Work*

*His is the most musical head  
that I have ever come across . . .*

RICHARD WAGNER  
on Johann Strauss' Son



## 7

*The Genius and His Brothers*

*And once again: it is no small thing  
to have played for mankind to dance.*

RICHARD SPECHT

## IL GENEROSO

The life of the elder Johann Strauss is more astounding than that of the younger. His path from an ordinary alehouse up to the highest society in England where he discussed the coronation program with the Duke of Wellington, was steeper and more eruptive than the later path taken by the son. And yet the life of the younger Strauss was incomparably the richer of the two. The element which most clearly distinguishes his talent from that of his father and teacher is possibly the absence of hustle. They were both equally industrious and equally productive, but the elder was prepared for a short life, the younger for a long. Without knowing his destiny, without knowing how his life would be constructed, he acted as if he would have all the time in the world. All the charm of his father's music appeared again in his own. His, too, were the lightning inspiration, the champagne bubbles of sensuality, the tireless urge to make people waltz. And yet there was something lova-

ble and generous, alien to the elder, in the music of the younger, which perhaps makes it greater. There is nobility in the tones of every waltz; a truly aristocratic attitude is apparent to us in the *Fledermaus*, and even more in *Zigeunerbaron*.

Out of the nobility of his heart he began immediately after his father's death to pursue a family policy; but it was an artistic policy too. He stressed his own identity with that of his just-deceased father. He did his best to make people forget as quickly as possible that in appearing himself he had actually been opposing the dead master. At the memorial service on October 11th (at which Mozart's *Requiem* was played) he conducted his father's orchestra. The elder Strauss had been a member of the artists' association *Ludlamshöhle*, a society which numbered Grillparzer and Bauernfeld, Castelli and Graeffner among its members. When these men proposed a memorial for the deceased master, Johann placed himself at their head and gave a concert in the Sofiensaal in which he played nothing but his father's compositions. To the tones of the *Radetzky March* the wrappings fell from the model of the statue on the platform.

He behaved like Henry V who immediately reconciled himself to the work of his predecessor. The feeling for the legitimate which had always characterized him guided him in discovering what was the right thing to do. He became reconciled to his father's orchestra with which he had been in fiercest competition for five years. It was not easy. Many a veteran who had been present in Paris and London could not find it in his heart to forgive young Strauss for the frequency of the announcements containing the little word Junior. What after all had the young man done to entitle him to place himself at their head? But their leading violinist Amon, now an old man who years ago had taught little Johann the violin, explained to his old fellow-musicians how sad it would be if they could no longer call themselves the Strauss orchestra; if a different

name were to appear at their head or if they were all to be scattered about the world. Thus through Amon, by means of this sentimental detour, the son succeeded in conquering their hearts. They brought him his father's baton on a cushion.

All they did was dynastic and monarchical. And this was no affectation. The orchestra is a little State in which there must be one absolute ruler, though there may be certain vested rights and republican attributes.

Barely two weeks after the death of his father, the son stood for the first time at the head of the Strauss orchestra. He was playing publicly in the Volksgarten. This was too soon for some of the Viennese. Though the Viennese citizen is as devoid of piety as any other race of men desirous of new things, yet the *appearance* of piety must be upheld if no feelings are to be hurt. And though the son with a perfectly clear conscience believed that he was continuing his father's work, some of his public were shocked. Disapproving voices sent him protests. Two months later he found himself obliged to print his defense in the official Imperial Journal, the *Wiener Zeitung*. This literary justification was tormentingly long, but honest. "Pitiable is every son who here below weeps at his father's grave; but still more pitiable is he whose divided home forces him to hear from the severely judging lips of his opponents a sentence passed on himself and those who have remained loyal to him; for him there remain no other weapons of defense than a reference to a deserted mother and younger brothers and sisters. I decided to apply my simple talents to the support and nourishment of these. It was a weak lever, but it had to lift heavy loads . . . It was not my purpose, as hostile opponents believe, to enter the lists against my father's far superior powers . . . May God be my witness, no! My father died, and now I stand alone in the midst of my weeping dear ones. I intend to earn a portion, even though it may be very small, of the favor that my deserving father so richly



harvested . . . If I should succeed in showing myself not unworthy of my artistic profession and thus be enabled to fulfil my duty towards my mother and my brothers and sisters, I believe that my blessed father will be reconciled to me in his grave and that this will give me the greatest possible happiness."

It was generous of him to account for his deeds to innumerable unknown persons whose acquaintance he would never make. The voices that had accused the young master of impiety were silenced. His impulse to put things right had again guided him truly.

"His father's party" lacked a personal center. There was no driving force which could have assembled a front against the young man. There was no widow dissolved in tears or raging for revenge. Emilie Trampusch remained hidden. Possibly from fear of infection she had left the joint apartment and had taken her children with her. Neighbors had heard her, in a maniacal temper, ill-treating the little daughter through whom the father and bread-winner had contracted scarlet fever. It was not till much later that she reappeared, in miserable circumstances. Johann the Younger did what he could to support the woman whom his father had loved. It was in vain. One day when she had nothing to eat, she hurried to the Döblinger Cemetery, snatched from the grave of her lover the decorated iron lanterns and sold them to a dealer in second-hand goods. She ended in direst poverty, as a servant maid to a coachman.

But there was still another reconciliation which young Strauss had to accomplish. This was the reconciliation with the Court. A lad of eighteen, Franz Josef, Ferdinand's nephew, had ascended the Imperial throne. He was almost the same age as Strauss. But at first a whole world separated them. Franz Josef came as the embodiment of a rigid principle which gave back its State framework to an almost exploded conglomeration of lands. Johann Strauss, however, was a man who had not concealed his sympathies with

the Left, "where" (as Gottfried Keller said) "the heart beats." He had emphasized them very loudly. He had committed one mad prank after another in the revolutionary year. Johann Strauss had been orchestra conductor of the National Guard, he had written student marches and had played the *Marseillaise* to numerous guests at the Grünes Tor when the city had already been conquered by Jellachich. He had been comparatively outspoken when called on to account for himself by the police (report of December 6, 1848), and he chose his music for its intrinsic value, taking no note of its political associations.

That was the truth. But nevertheless Strauss was not really a revolutionary at all. He was nothing but an enthusiastic, fiery, honest young man who intoxicated himself on colors and forms. "People have made fun of Victor Hugo," says Ricarda Huch, "because he was in turn Bonapartist, a liberal, a republican and a socialist; at any rate this proves that romanticism can be combined with the most varying political opinions."

Thus Strauss was entirely honest when he became reconciled to the monarchy represented by the young Emperor Franz Josef. All his life Strauss had a feeling for everything which was genuinely representative. With true judgment he realized that the young heir of the Habsburgs was not a mere military figurehead. Even though at the beginning Franz Josef erred on the side of implacability and autocracy (possibly because he was afraid of being too soft-hearted), people gave him credit for being a real human being at heart. Without committing himself unworthily, Strauss could dedicate to the Emperor his march *Viribus Unitis* because he believed in the combined forces of a new era. And after all the Emperor was young; in his moral atmosphere there was something knightly and generous; and this identity of generation which went some way to being identity of species created the beginning of affection.

## JOHANN STRAUSS THE YOUNGER

### FERTILITY

It is the greatest composers who compose for special occasions; they need a stimulus to liberate their inspirations. It may be something spiritual, or intellectual, a piece of news, a text, an operatic libretto, or merely a mood. Composers of this kind, reacting to external or internal stimuli, were Beethoven, Weber and Wagner.

The other type is more feminine and less comprehensible. The fertility of Haydn, Schubert and Johann Strauss was spontaneous; they composed without any stimulus at all, indeed they composed every day, every minute, every second without even the shadow of an actual experience. When he was over seventy, Strauss wrote to his friend Max Kalbeck, "The melodies gush out like fresh water." He could not have expressed himself more modestly. He did not educate himself, he did not spur himself, he did not construct some great hydraulic engine to pump up melodies from the wells in his unconscious as greater musicians have done; he could even speak of his melodies rather oddly as "fresh water." But they flowed for seventy years. Like the jet from a fountain quietly dropping into a hollowed tree trunk the shape of which is eternally changing, Strauss' volume of melody, his light dance music which changes every second, takes shapes which resemble each other but are never quite alike. His jet of music sways hither and thither and never ceases.

Strauss was always composing, unless he happened to be eating or sleeping. Possibly, like Haydn and Schubert, he even composed then. Strauss would cover the leaves of his sketch book, his cuffs and his nightshirt, with music; if he were in the dark he would scribble letters which he could decipher as music the next morning. Often enough, however, he attached no importance to these jottings. As he composed continuously, what he wrote down was only a fraction. Hardly ever did he consider one of his inspirations as

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of more importance than another, and he left it to his wife (his last wife, Adele) to make a collection of his melodies, a "cache" to which he would resort when necessary.

The necessity sometimes arose from his profession as a dance-conductor. It was a tragi-comedy that this absolute artist from whom melodies rushed out like water without summons or purpose was never able to create in the absolute. His whole life long as the successor of his famous father he was obliged to write dance music, music with a purpose, and nearly always he had to force his myriad inspirations into three-quarter time. Before he began to write operettas (and he wrote his first operetta at the age of forty-four) he had neither the time nor the courage to write for the human voice, though the song-form must have appealed to him. The dance industry had him in its tyrannical clutches.

It was pity enough that Lanner and the elder Strauss were forced to industrialize their talents and that their profession compelled them to produce nothing but dance music. But in the case of Johann the Great it is still more gruesome. Unconsciously his whole talent reveals the lifelong rebellion of the absolute musician against the compulsion to produce music with a purpose. It was the rebellion of music against the dance.

The rebellion was unsuccessful. Music could not shake off the tyranny of the dance. But it could ennoble it. This Johann the Elder had done and with his increased resources and his deepened talent the younger Johann did the same.

## NEW HALLS

As the industrialization of France by Napoleon I had made a great impression on the Emperor Franz I, so the influence of Napoleon III and amazement at his successes were traceable in the Emperor Franz Josef, the grandson of Franz I. True, there was no personal love and still less was there political affiliation. At the

beginning of his reign the Emperor Franz Josef's policy harmonized with that of Russia, not with that of France, if only for the reason that it was the French who in the south were stiffening the resistance of the Italians against Austria.

Nevertheless it is possible to say that even then Vienna was coming under the influence of Paris. Vienna was being turned into a world city by the absolute will of the Emperor and against the will of her middle classes. Bourgeois industry had hardly begun and millionaires were unknown; the Emperor created for them a city into which as it were, they had to grow. The autocratic Emperor built railways, founded medals, bonuses, prizes. Everywhere and at all times he would speak of Trade and Commerce.

An Imperial hand-written note of December, 1857, made an end of the architectural picture of old Vienna. It decreed that the bastions were to be razed and that the defensive slopes were to be built upon. Franz Josef took a realistic view of things. To begin with, Vienna was not a fortress at all; and secondly even if it were a fortress, it could not be defended from the bastions against the outlying parts. Franz Josef desired a great world city with broad thoroughfares into which traffic could pour unhindered. The Viennese made it difficult for him, they were slow to understand what he wanted. The die-hards sent the painter Amerling as a delegate to the Emperor. He appeared with flying coat tails. "Your Majesty, I have come to save the defensive slopes of the fort. We have lost everything. We have lost our church festival in the Brigittenau, our civic Guard at the procession on Corpus Christi day and our old dearly-beloved bastions. If something has to be done, it would be sufficient if your Majesty would have two large artificial lakes made; people could go boating on them in the summer and skate on them in the winter. Groups of people would meet there, salesmen would come there and beautiful pictures might be painted

there . . ." This amusingly typical protest expresses the despair of the Vienna of Franz and Ferdinand, of the dear old Biedermeier tradition which revelled in Schwind's pictures and was discreetly drawn to the ancient Dutch mode of painting. The Emperor had his demolishing done all the same and Johann Strauss wrote the *Demoliererpolka*. Parisian tempi invaded the sleepy South-German city. Entrepreneurs strongly encouraged by the Emperor, silk manufacturers, owners of spinning factories, the Stock Exchange, all combined to give new values to life, to produce new colorings, new music, new forms of print, fashions, materials, ribbons, shapes of shoes. In a word, the Austrian monarchy was exceedingly prosperous in the fifties and sixties, though there seemed to be no particular reason for its prosperity.

The bourgeoisie took possession of its new dance-halls. The old ones were worn out or extinct. The Mondscheinsaal, so popular at the beginning of the century, had long ceased to be a place of entertainment. The building now housed Stein's pianoforte factory. Wires and dampers, ivory and ebony had replaced the one-time dancers. By the middle of the century even Wolffsohn's famous Apollosaal had disappeared. Its place had been taken by the Apollo candle factory.

The Sperl was still in existence, but its reputation had deteriorated. The cocottes of the Leopoldstadt made their brazen way into it and drove away the better-class patrons. The new Dommayer became the successful rival of the famous old Sperl. In June, 1838, Dommayer opened his Casino next to the imperial palace of Schönbrunn. Here, Rabensteiner the dancing master, gave his *mille-fleurs* balls; and Lanner composed his *Schönbrunner Walzer* for Dommayer before he laid down his violin forever in 1842.

Another establishment of European fame dating from the reign of Ferdinand was that known as the Sofiensaal. This remained the

favorite dance hall during the whole of the Franz Josef epoch; not in vain did it bear the name of the Archduchess Sophia, the mother of the Emperor. It was founded by Franz Morawetz.

Franz Morawetz, the son of Jewish parents, had a strange history—a history which made it difficult to understand why he of all people should have become the promoter of highly elegant pleasures. It was in August, 1813, when after the battle of Kulm a Russian regiment in flight and half dead from fatigue arrived at the Bohemian village of Raudnitz and was billeted there. The Colonel, who was quartered on a poverty-stricken Jewish tailor, demanded a steam bath from his trembling hosts. Nobody had heard of such a thing. But the sixteen year old son who had his wits about him suggested that they should treat the Russian Colonel's body as tailors treat cloth before they make it up. In other words, he proposed to steam the officer, taking care not to allow the water to touch him. No sooner said than done. Hell-clouds of steam soon enveloped the happily puffing Colonel. His pores opened, as cloth which has been shrunk gains in depth and brilliance. "You are the first Austrian to know anything about steam baths," screamed the Colonel as he ran out naked into the cold courtyard. After a few minutes he came back and again hurled himself into the steam bath; the pores which had closed, opened to give forth more perspiration. He presented Franz Morawetz with his watch and said that if he, Franz, would move to Vienna he would certainly make his fortune with Russian baths. A year later, on the occasion of the Vienna Congress, the tailor apprentice from Raudnitz really set out on foot for Vienna. But not to found an establishment for steam baths. On the contrary, for the purpose of earning his living as an industrious cloth-cutter. Ten years later he married a worthy tailor's daughter who brought him an enormous dowry—40,000 gulden. Unfortunately, his eyesight became so feeble that he was obliged to look around for a different profession.

But what was he to do? Suddenly he remembered the Russian colonel. Since then he had found a dreamy pleasure in steam. True, it did not help his eyes. But as he went around Vienna, consulting various doctors, he would make inquiries, cleverly and casually, as to the healing properties of steam in cases of rheumatism, paralysis, cramps and inflammations of the nerves. He thus learnt that all doctors were enthusiastic about the powers of steam. But till then nobody had had the very simple idea of establishing a whole house as a steambath institute. This Morawetz did with his money. But by the time the first plans were brought to him, the poor man could no longer see them. He was blind. From memory he directed the construction and the interior decoration of the house.

What he had expected happened; the Viennese doctors soon sent their patients to his steambath establishment. Vienna is a rheumatic city. The icy Hungarian east wind alternates every few hours with the *Föhn* from the Alps and the warm west wind. The Viennese citizen left his winter catarrhs and a great deal of money at the establishment of Franz Morawetz. The blind man, who took care of every patient as if he were a doctor, began to think of launching out. He wanted to build a swimming hall in which one could close up the pores softened by the steambath. This was a memory he owed to his old luck-bringer, the Russian colonel. He had never been able to forget how the naked man had run out in the courtyard. First he founded a joint-stock company with a stock capital of 200,000 gulden and had himself elected President. Then he called upon famous architects—Siccardsburg and Van der Nüll, later the architect of the Opera House—and gave orders for the great central hall with the ceiling cross-pieces. The building authorities forbade the hall. This crazy way of building, there could be no doubt, would certainly end in the ceiling's crashing down on the heads of the swimmers. Energetic little Morawetz, hardly



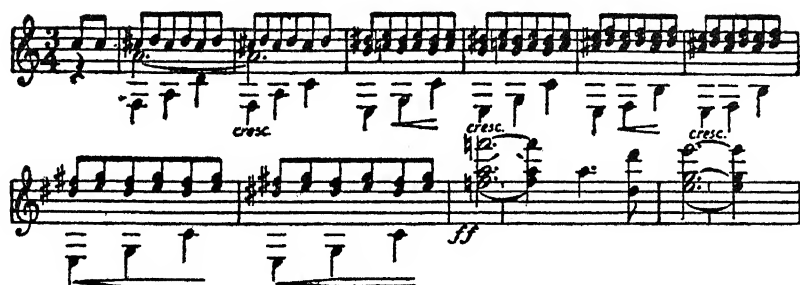
bigger than a dolphin, who in spite of his blindness felt his way along all the walls where the builders were busy, surmounted all difficulties. He was stronger than the building authorities. The Emperor himself protected him, and his hall is still standing.

But it is no longer a swimming hall. Morawetz's belief that the Viennese public would bathe in cold water in the winter to refresh themselves after their steam baths had been mistaken. The great swimming hall in the Sofien building was only visited in the summer. Promptly Morawetz altered its construction and for the winter turned it into a ballroom. The couples swayed their way beneath immense chandeliers. Sometimes the ceiling would open and as at antique banquets, a basket of rosebuds would descend on the dancers in the midst of winter. Carnival was in full swing. The greatest balls took place in the Sofiensaal; these were the Concordia balls of the literary world, the festivals of the doctors and lawyers, the balls given by the Poles, by the technicians.

Strauss was everywhere. It was high time for him to look for assistants. At six o'clock one morning in February he was sitting at a table, sleep-starved and weary, the last drops of champagne in a glass before him; the sun was already up and shining through the windows into the Sofiensaal. The final gallop had chased the guests out of the hall. And then an anxious committee-member of the technicians' ball approached young Strauss who was resting his heavy head in his hands, and asked him whether the waltz which had been ordered for the next day would be ready in time.

Not a note of it had been written. Strauss, though he smiled, was worried and a little embarrassed; and then the situation took charge of him. He thought: technique . . . dammed energy . . . transference of energy . . . drive . . . machines . . . and already his head was beginning to hum like an engine, to whirr like a child's musical box.

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His tired brain had evolved the famous waltzes *Accelerationen*. They were written on the menu card held out to him by blind Morawetz. They were played the next night.

The greatest entrepreneur of the ball industry, the Wolffsohn of the sixties, was Karl Schwender from Karlsruhe. He had been a butcher's apprentice and was a great contrast to Franz Morawetz. Morawetz seemed all nerves, Schwender all muscle. First he became a waiter, then he obtained the lease of a cowshed and a meadow belonging to the castle Arnstein-Pereira. There he inaugurated a summer restaurant. His speculation proving successful, he added a coffee-room and ballroom and later he enlarged his establishment till it became a veritable city of pleasure like the Prater, but more elegant. Ten years after he had started with his cowshed, Schwender had three enormous ballrooms, magnificent staircases, a theater which could accommodate five hundred persons, restaurants, cloakrooms and kitchens for many thousands, to say nothing of an army of pastry-cooks. One of his innovations was a kind of shell built to accommodate a large orchestra well above the level of the dance hall with special devices to magnify sound. There was inter-communication between the theater and the ball-rooms, so that when the performance was over the theatergoers could swell the numbers of the dancers. Schwender's houseballs were the acme of extravagance and were very famous. Still

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more famous were his rag-balls at which the richest people in Vienna donned beggars' clothes and revolting masks. At the close of the carnival season there would be great herring feasts attended by thousands of people. Bad taste was rampant. On Ash Wednesday for instance Schwender's menu would include an "architectural duel of boiled lobsters," a "trout minuet" and "Orpheus on a monster salmon." Vienna had grown rich and crazy.

For summer pleasures Schwender built another huge establishment. This he called the *Neue Welt*. It had a platform in the park which was illuminated in the evenings by hundreds of tiny gas flames hidden in glass tulip-cups among natural flowers. By day crowds of Viennese made pilgrimage to the place, to see the hot-houses, the orangerie, the camellias. Schwender was more famous than the Emperor, his park more popular than that of Schönbrunn.

Strauss played here as everywhere. Every hall, every association wanted him. Balls all the winter, balls all the summer. It was no wonder that he collapsed. His breakdown came at an earlier age than his father's had done. He was only twenty-eight when, coming home very early one morning, he fell at his mother's feet in a faint. Doctors were called in and pronounced him to be very seriously ill.

### BROTHER JOSEF

From his pillows he contemplated his life. He lived in the main like his father but without the latter's passion for fiddling in public. For his father life had meant traveling, wandering through countries with his fiddle. Lying in his bed Johann realized that he was far more a composer and far less a virtuoso than his father.

But it was the orchestra which supported them all—his mother, himself, his brothers Josef and Eduard, his sisters Nelli and There-

sia. If he were to retire from its leadership, it would have to be taken over by another member of the family. He sent his terrified mother to Josef with a message requesting him to lead the Strauss orchestra from then on.

Josef Strauss looked like Franz Liszt. Melancholy eyes, without the inquisitiveness of the mother, but with her pathetic and tenderly curving mouth. He had not the bonhomie of Johann, nor the sunny brightness of his laughter and his movements. His serious mien was impressive when he was playing the piano. For the rest, Josef Strauss was no musician and had no desire to be one. At first he burst into a mocking laugh when his mother and brother asked him to take over the orchestra, and then he grew really angry.

In his case the father's prohibition had fallen on fruitful soil. All his inclinations tended towards a bourgeois profession. He had had to struggle hard in order to be able to pursue his favorite studies. With heart and soul he was an inventor. Josef Strauss was deeply convinced that life would be humanized by the era of technical progress. He had opposed his father who shortly before his death had wished to make an officer of him. Adherent as he was of the German ideas of enlightenment, progress and humanity, Josef had rejected his father's demand. He was not afraid of death, but he did not wish to become a cripple, nor did he desire to make others into cripples. "Leave me where I am; let me be what I am. Do not tear me out of a life that may bring me pleasures, a life full of satisfaction. Do not cast me out into that inconstant rough world which destroys all feeling for humanity, a world for which I am not fitted, to which I was not born. I do not want to learn how to kill people, do not want to be honored by high military rank for having hunted human beings, I want to be useful to mankind as a human being and to the State as a citizen." He was under twenty when he wrote this. His father, quite

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honestly, had not wished his sons to become musicians because he wanted "to preserve them from an unsettled life." And yet he would have given his second son the unsettled career of an officer. Possibly this was due to ambition and the hope of making advantageous connections. Or possibly he wanted to take the boy away from his mother. In any case, Josef's and Anna's combined opposition to the plan was successful. With money obtained from his father, Anna sent Josef to High School and the Polytechnic. Till 1850 he was architectural designer in the service of Ubal, the municipal architect; later he became an architect himself and in the following year built a great water-works in Trumau and was made chief engineer of a spinning factory. Day and night he ruminated on inventions. He took out a number of patents. One of these, a machine for sweeping the streets, was acquired by the Viennese magistracy and put to practical use. His future was secured on bourgeois lines and he was respected.

Into this active but tranquil existence burst his brother's request to represent him in his orchestra. Johann, it was obvious, was seriously ill. He had to retire for an indefinite time to take the cure in Cilli in southern Styria. Josef felt that his mother was merely trying to appease him when she assured him that in six months' time he would be able to return to his factory or his drawing board. He was the more indignant because he decided that he was being deceived.

Was he calmly to give up the profession of an inventor which had cost him such bitter struggles with his father? He protested furiously on the grounds that it was not fair to force him into hated activities for which he had no time. Sometimes he would say "no talent" instead of "no time." Then Johann from his bed would look at him with his great eyes and say, "You are the most talented of us all." Quite simply, using no words of persuasion, with the

simple strength of truth, he told his brother that he would become a greater musician than either Johann himself or their father. Josef ceased to protest. This was more than pecuniary anxiety on the part of the "family Strauss, manufacturers, music wholesale and retail," more than the business drive of their worried mother, this was something deeper.

For a few days he thought the matter over. What was so hateful to him in his family's wish? The profession of a musician? No. Only the profession of a conductor, the work that had something untrue, something feminine, something not quite honest about it. What did the papers write about Johann? They were already writing as they had about their father. Embarrassing panegyrics: "Your raven-black curly hair with its well-dressed waves . . . the shadowy thicket of your side whiskers . . . a slight obeisance on your part, a thunderclap on ours . . . You make a sign with your bow, a semi-glance shoots to the right, a semi-glance to the left and all your forty men hurl themselves into opus 999, playing it by heart . . . Your sombre figure stands high above the merry throng. The tip of your bow is always ahead. When a tragic passage approaches, your bow rises and falls in long, gentle oscillations, followed by your hand, your whole arm; and finally the whole of Johann swings to and fro from his hips. Then there follows a swifter tempo, the bow makes quick zigzag springs from left to right, the whole man follows the movement, the man beats time with the bow and the bow on its part with the man. The pace grows stormy. You take your bow as a fencer takes his sword; no longer do you beat time, you scourge it; with your thumb you give every stroke the necessary emphasis, you thrust a *tierce*, then a *carte* as if you were fighting a duel. Now you parry, now you lunge out with all your force. This is a fencing lesson set to music! But the crisis is still to come. Suddenly the bow stays rigid in the air, one wild

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look is directed to the right, another to the left—the conductor throws back his head and tears the violin from his hip against which it has been resting, places it in position and hurls his brave troops, himself at their head, into the *fortissimo*. His bow tears at the strings, rages across them. His tone shrills through the whirr and clangor of the ensemble. His arms are spread wide, the revers of his dress coat fly apart, the tails fly open, the little golden chain with the half dozen miniature orders flaps, the gleaming locket opens and jumps up and down on his waistcoat as if in fear. In truth, the personification of three-quarter time has taken possession of a black suit. Raging applause comes from all corners of the electrified hall and drowns the last chords. With a movement which is half a bow and half a dive from the heights, Johann Strauss has suddenly disappeared from the desk. *This much we must concede you, Johann the II, you understand how to stage-manage your waltzes.*"

What shocking taste! So the world wanted its favorite musician to be the perfect comedian. And this in a serious age which had produced Young and Soerensen, Nasmyth and Bessemer. Moreover it was a wrong that the world was doing his brother; for Johann, as Josef knew, was an excellent musician.

Josef's doubts were finally overcome by Johann's tribute to his musicianship. He remembered his childhood and the Beethoven duets he had played with his elder brother. He realized that he could make music without playing the buffoon. He could stand serious and immovable and be a good conductor without stylish tricks or dash. Half-unconsciously he consented and Johann left for Neuhaus-Cilli.

With the enthusiasm of an engineer, Josef now spent day and night working his way through his musical apprenticeship. He took theory lessons with Professor Doleschal (who had been

Johann's teacher) and violin lessons from the now incredibly ancient Amon. He did not find violin-playing easy and he was unable to conduct with his violin. He conducted with a baton, which is really forbidden. Anxiously he rehearsed the waltzes. He was as sparing as possible with his movements, thus hiding his secret excitement. But his stiffness did not repel his public. Feminine Vienna found a new charm in this awkward moonstruck Strauss who was such a contrast to his elegant brother. The sympathy felt by the public for Johann was extended to include Josef.

So much for the impression Josef Strauss made as a dance conductor. There remained his task as composer, inseparable from his other duties. All the conductors in Vienna composed dances, including Fahrbach and Morelli. He was diffident in regard to his creative powers and half reluctantly he wrote on his program for July 23, 1853, the waltz-title *Die Ersten und Letzten von Josef Strauss*.

"But that is very good music," Johann Strauss said shortly afterwards when he returned from Neuhaus-Cilli. He had recovered and was ready to take over the orchestra again. One look at Josef's pale face and he saw that that would not be such a simple matter. Once more, as in his father's time, there would be two Strausses. Johann realized this before Josef, who made new difficulties when after the first waltz a second was demanded of him. Still more diffidently than the first time he wrote on a sheet of paper *Die Ersten nach den Letzten Tänzer*.

And then suddenly there came the flood. The underground explosion, the sudden miracle of springs in which all those parts of Josef were drowned which till then had not consisted of musician-ship. There followed the incredible: two hundred and twenty-two compositions by a man who had made difficulties about writing a single one. No aesthetic theorist can explain this. The phenomenon



of fertility was revealed in Johann the Father, called forth by a strong will; in Johann the Younger it happened without his volition; in Josef the Astounding it happened against his will.

Josef had married in 1857. His bride was Karoline Pruckmayr, a Viennese girl. It was a marriage of love fulfilled, it was both bourgeois and romantic. And yet in Josef's waltzes there are such glowing tones of passion held in leash as if he had been unloved. It was said that he had originally refused to become a conductor because he thought he was too ugly. Beneath his success there must have remained some drops of this bitter belief. It might explain the elegiac current, the strange abrupt melancholy which sometimes yawns in his dances. In contrast to his father and brother, Josef's eyes looked out in a minor key.

But not always. The piece of music that secured him immortality is flooded with the intoxicating sunshine of a great landscape in a major key. This is the *Dorfschwalben aus Oesterreich*. Actually Josef was not a child of nature. He was a pale worker of the night, he preferred the smoke of countless cigars to the scents of the woods and trees. He only came into the company of human beings when he looked at them from his rostrum. In his inmost heart he was so anti-social that—a monstrous thing for a Viennese—he could even boast of not having been on the Stefansplatz for a whole year. But the secret of creative fantasy has no limits. The *Dorfschwalben aus Oesterreich* was the work of a man who spent his life in closed rooms.

The music score has the same fidelity to nature as Schubert's introduction to the *Lindenbaum* which reveals with a positively graphic exactitude the tiny movements of the linden leaves in the night wind. Similarly the foundation of Josef's waltz is a realistic feeling for nature, not studio portraiture. The swallows become part of ourselves. They carry the action, they carry themselves, but the tips of their wings touch the borders of our souls, and we feel

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their trembling happiness when in the village street they turn their little bodies with lightning rapidity, fly back and shoot forth anew.

As the beloved little creature flies through nature in the open, so it flies through Josef Strauss' waltz. There is the gentle sinking before the goal and the rise immediately afterwards;



Like every real long-distance flier, the swallow in reality flies straight. But between the houses and the stables where it loses way, it is obliged, as if it were a sparrow, to make tiny little whirring movements:



It is an Austrian house among the smoky beams of which the swallows make their nests. That is why Josef takes for his own the colors of the zither, uses the form of the *Ländler*:



He takes the sobbing broken third as sung by people in the country when they are both gay and serious:



and then as if Schubert's kiss had suddenly reached him from the Elysian fields, Josef has a superb inspiration:



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Since Schubert's death there has been no such melody. It is in the realm of the *Impromptus* and the *Moments Musicaux*. It breathes the sweet blue from which the swallows come.

Incessant twittering permeates the waltz. Could anything be less conspicuous than the ever-recurring grace notes:



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the tragi-comic dangers were just as exaggerated as the salary. Everything was possible in that great country Russia, which extended without a boundary to China, to Persia and India and then again to the North Pole. In contrast to his father, Johann was not fond of traveling, at least not of constant traveling. At best he cared for it as a quick adventure which must not be too exhausting. He inquired whether the Russian engagement would mean a great deal of commotion and learnt that he would live, not in a hotel, but in an isolated villa situated in a park; they would provide him with a secretary. He signed the contract.

Several years later he had a very unpleasant adventure in Russia. He had just given a concert in Breslau and had set off for Warsaw without having provided himself and his friends with valid passports. The musicians were halted at the Silesian-Russian frontier; orders had been given that traveling companies of artists were not to be allowed into Warsaw. They were hauled out of their compartments and compelled to spend the night in a wretched village with hay and straw for their beds. In the end the police allowed Strauss and one of the musicians to travel to Warsaw and see the governor. General Abramowitsch received the master very ungraciously. "You say you are Strauss from Vienna? You are all robbers and gypsies and we have quite enough of them."

After being thus thrown out, Strauss met a man he knew in the ante-chamber. It was an art dealer by the name of Friedlein.

Friedlein went in to the governor and declared that he knew Strauss personally and could guarantee that the man outside was no impostor.

The governor refused to believe him. He was in deadly fear of revolutionaries and mistrusted everybody.

"Go back to your hotel," he thundered at Strauss, who was completely disconcerted, "and go to bed at once. You must surrender your clothes." Strauss obeyed. An official kept watch in his room,

drinking brandy. About midnight Friedlein came to see him and advised sending a messenger to the Governor with a proposal. The rest of the musicians were to be brought to Warsaw and allowed to play on their instruments as proof of their identity. The Governor was more frightened and more furious than before. He suspected a new trick and refused.

Finally it occurred to Friedlein to send a telegram to the Czarina's Master of the Household. The Czarina was at Castle Laschenski, near Warsaw, together with her Court. And now at length a Court attendant appeared and liberated Strauss. And then too, somewhat belatedly, the Austrian Consul in Warsaw put in a word for Strauss; till then, having regard to the continuous state of siege maintained by the Russians in Poland, he had not ventured to intervene on behalf of his fellow-countryman. The wrathful Abramowitsch was commanded by the Czarina to allow Strauss and his people to play the next day at the Théâtre-Paré. With a sour-sweet smile the Governor came up to Strauss the next evening. "You must forgive me, Master. It is my duty to be exceedingly cautious. We are living here between two revolutions, one past and one future. You and your men might really have been political conspirators—and if that had been the case, I might have been banished to Siberia. And so you must not take it amiss that with these two alternatives before me, I would rather have had you deported."

That was Russia, as Strauss was slowly to make its acquaintance. A land of exaggeration and tragedy; a land where life was lived to the accompaniment of church bells, sleigh bells and the rattle of spurs; where plains stretched out to the horizon and the pageantry of peasant costumes was in constant evidence.

Musical taste in the great world of St. Petersburg was dominated by France and Italy. That had been so for centuries. There had been a great many German conductors, including Richard Wagner, in

the Baltic districts and in the theaters of western Russia, but these individuals had not influenced Russian taste in the direction of German music.

Strangely enough, Strauss owed his monster engagement in Russia, at least in part, to a political consideration. Russia was at war with a number of European Powers. The English were blockading the Baltic and throwing bombs on Cronstadt. In the Crimea the French had landed with the English; the Turks and the Italians were besieging Sebastopol. No enemy alien could be entrusted with the conduct of the Pawlowsk concerts. But as the Russian Government thought it important that the population of St. Petersburg should be entertained and kept in good spirits, a conductor of international fame had to be found. Eliminating the hostile countries there remained Berlin and Vienna. Gunkel of Berlin was first proposed, but his reputation did not carry enough weight. And so they came to Strauss, the Austrian. As in the eighteen-thirties the elder Strauss had imported the Viennese waltz into Paris and London, so in the fifties the younger Johann brought it to St. Petersburg.

Johann Strauss was a very prominent personage during those summers. Three or four times a week the members of the Court and the bourgeoisie, who lived either in St. Petersburg itself or on their summer estates around the city, would come to Pawlowsk to hear him. The Imperial box in the Concert Hall was never empty and the Czar was never tired of applauding demonstratively. Thousands of people followed his example. The concerts in the Vauxhall Palace took place daily; there were four great evenings and three lesser ones in the week. The lesser evenings lasted more than three, the greater at least five hours. That was Russian insatiability. Often enough the playing would come to a violent end when the great bell in the hall would boom out its signal that the last train was leaving for St. Petersburg. Strauss

would stop even in the middle of a bar out of consideration for the thousands of visitors from the capital.

But he did not always succeed in his object. One evening, in spite of the warning bell, the public made no attempt to leave the hall and enter the train. That was the time when Johann Strauss had given the first performance of his Polka, *Im Pawlowsker Wald*. The audience applauded and remained seated. In vain railway officials armed with large whistles forced their way into the hall. They threatened to let the train depart. In vain again Strauss left his desk and made a sign to his musicians to pack up their instruments. The audience would not let them through. They wanted the concert to continue although it had already lasted five hours. Amidst laughter and shouting the train could be heard departing for St. Petersburg, giving melancholy snorts as it left the station. This meant that thousands of people were prevented from returning home and had nowhere to spend the night. Jubilation increased. Strauss returned. Speaking in French he turned to his audience, "Ladies and gentlemen. If each one of you will pay two roubles for the benefit of the men wounded in the war, I will continue playing for another hour." He was answered by frenzied shouting. And so until two o'clock in the morning Strauss hurled into the auditorium his own and his father's waltzes and polkas.

But where were the people to go? It was one of those white nights that wed St. Petersburg to the north. Nightingales were singing in the huge park. The stupefying scent of jasmine and lilac was wafted across the meadows. The officers, their presence revealed by the glowing tips of their cigars, stood about in groups on the graveled paths and the grass. The women's immense crinolines, flanked by male protectors, swayed delicately hither and thither. The warm northern light flooded the heavens and nobody thought about going to bed. People camped on tables and chairs in the park. Strauss put his own villa at the disposal of a few digni-

taries such as generals and merchant princes. But the sun would soon rise and a telegram had already announced that there would be an early morning train to St. Petersburg.

On another such white summer night, on the verge of dawn, Johann Strauss looked for the first time into the face of Olga Smirnitzki. Olga Smirnitzki, one of a large family connected by marriage with state officials of aristocratic birth, was the same type as Tatiana in Pushkin's *Eugen Onegin*. She was romantic, sentimental, well-read, intellectual, had a sense of humor and tantalizing moods. Friendship with her released Strauss' intellectual powers in a way that had never happened before. He found himself capable of writing letters in which spiritual experiences found expression; this was very unlike him. It was as if he and Olga were involuntarily enacting a novel by Turgenieff. In the same way as he through her influence learnt to play on language, Olga through contact with him began to compose. Love infused genius into her, at least temporarily. She wrote songs and a mazurka that were admired, not only by Strauss. Thus the man of thirty-three and the girl of twenty stimulated each other's powers. The temperature of their association was regulated by the necessity for secrecy. When it became known there were stormy scenes.

Olga Smirnitzki had been destined by her family to marry a man on the threshold of the customary career of higher officialdom in St. Petersburg. An orchestra conductor from Vienna, even one as famous as Johann Strauss whose picture with a facsimile of his signature was on sale for ten kopeks at every station in St. Petersburg, was not a choice her parents could approve. Anna Strauss in Vienna disapproved of her boy's marriage plans just as strongly when he informed her of them by letter. And her opinion still carried great weight with him. One friend by the name of Pauline (later married to Swertschkoff, the artist) and a secretary called



Leibrock were the only people who gave help and encouragement to the young people's romance. Leibrock played Leporello to Johann Strauss who was anything but a Don Giovanni. He was deeply, fervently in love.

"I am more and more convinced," he wrote on July 31st, "that you are the being destined for me by God, and there is no space within me which could harbor the thought of living without you." But Leibrock, he said, was intolerable. He was sitting by the side of the writer, giving it as his opinion that though Olga was certainly pretty and amiable, what Johann Strauss felt for her was respect and not love. She was much too intellectual to be loved.

"Leibrock is asleep now, I am contented at last," Johann writes a few days later near four o'clock in the morning. "Tell me, Olga," he asks anxiously, "what do your parents think? Even if you have not spoken to them (because I asked you to wait a few days till I have news from my mother), you are probably able to find out whether they are inclined to fulfil our wishes?"

"If," he writes, "it should really be impossible to win over the parents in the course of that same summer, would it be possible the next year?" But that would mean six months separation. It was hardly to be borne.

In Vienna there lived one Elise who would very much have liked to marry Johann. He informed Olga of this by letter, adding that he need only ask Mother Anna and she would find some tactful way to rid him of the intentions of Elise and her family.

In the early morning hours when Johann Strauss could not sleep, when remnants of music were still throbbing in his veins, he would write long letters to Olga. Once he mentioned Schumann's pain-filled harmonies, writing the name in large letters: SCHUMANN. Had she noticed how sad he (Johann) had been that evening at the concert? "Even before the concert I was causelessly enveloped in melancholy and this was increased to its supreme pitch by the

Schumann music . . . Why can I not be like other people? Olga, how unhappy I am! . . . I have never wept for myself before, but today—I could confess it to no one but you—it happened . . .”

He was anything but a mere technician. Everything he played affected him profoundly. Schumann, the great lover, affected him particularly just then.

On August 27th there was something of a rift between the lovers. On September 17th he wrote: “Naughty little child, why did you scold me in your bon-bon?” These “bon-bons” were sweetmeats in which Olga would conceal her love letters. She would place these *billets d’amour* in a tree of the park at Pawlowsk where Leibrock would fetch them three times a week. This precaution against discovery by Olga’s parents was in vain however. The day after that letter was written, a discussion took place between Olga’s determined mother and Johann Strauss. This conversation destroyed all his hopes. Strauss wrote to Olga saying that her mother had destroyed his hopes of happiness and had spoken in a strangely ruthless way about her own child. “When she said to me that I was not to believe a word you said, that all you did was designed to bring me to the point of madness; that all your wishes were inspired by the devil within you, then I conceived a positive hatred against a mother . . . who could say such insulting things about her own child.” Then he continues, “Her behavior to me was heartless and indelicate. When she wanted me to give up your letters to her and I swore to her that your letters were to accompany me into my grave, your mother roundly declared that *as my health was so feeble I might die any minute*.” If Father Smirnitzki should demand the letters from him, he would say without hesitation that he had burnt them. “For I need these letters to preserve my own life and I cannot do without them.” And so he goes on raging in superlatives, but the next day he was quite happy again. Once again he found “bon-bons” in the hollow tree at Pawlowsk and

attempted to read them when driving to the concert. But the lanterns were too feeble. So he read them in the interval of the concert, and allowed "all the ladies from Pawlowsk and Czarskoe-Seloe to walk past me until the feel of their space-consuming crinolines and the rustle of their dresses roused me from my dreaming." He was happy in the belief that Olga loved him; and he still believed it in Vienna where he arrived in the middle of November, 1859, to conduct the great concert in honor of the centenary of the birth of Friedrich Schiller. The whole affair was discussed in Viennese society, and at the next masked ball in the Redoutensaal an anonymous lady whispered to him that she wished her name were Olga. And so the melancholy passion of this Russian love romance was gradually transposed into Viennese gaiety and irony. Almost unnoticed by Johann, there came a day when Olga was forgotten. There remained only the waltz *Das Reise-Abenteuer* and the polka-mazurka *l'Espiègle*, which in Vienna is called *Der Kobold* and which was possibly composed by Olga. It bears the number of a Strauss opus, the number 226. That is all that remains of Olga.

There is nothing strange about it, for Strauss was young and had not yet met the woman who was really to prove his complement. It was far stranger that in the main the Russian summers and their atmosphere left no impression on his work. He never learnt to make music in the Russian manner. The pieces with Russian titles had no national coloring, the titles were simply camouflage and a matter of polite etiquette. This becomes comprehensible when one remembers that Strauss' Russian travels were nearly all undertaken in the fifties. When Strauss came to St. Petersburg, Alexander Borodin, for example, was only twenty-one, Balakireff was under twenty, Mussorgsky under sixteen, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakoff was eleven and Glazounoff was still unborn. Except for a few typical mannerisms in the work of Glinka and Seroff, there

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was nothing in the Russian music of the time that constituted a national Russian school, as Chopin's music was Polish or Franz Liszt's Hungarian. Anton Rubinstein deliberately avoided everything Russian in order to remain international. And so Strauss received far less stimulation from St. Petersburg than his father had received from Paris. But the seed of one immortal idea was implanted in him there, a seed which did not ripen till much later. At the summit of his life and his talent he invented Prince Orlofsky as the symbol of his Russian adventures, of the comedy, the superlatives and the elfish but dangerous crudities of life in Russia. Without the knowledge of champagne and of the Russian aristocracy Johann Strauss could not have given the *Fledermaus* to the world.

### EDUARD STRAUSS

Johann Strauss was in St. Petersburg every spring, so that Josef was in sole charge of the orchestra and responsible for all the work that entailed. It proved too much for one person, so that Eduard's services were called upon—for the first time in 1859. He did not make the same difficulties as his brother Josef had done six years before.

Eduard, ten years younger than Johann, was just twenty-four. He was beautiful in a theatrical way. His mother's dark eyes under the heavy lids which half covered them gleamed in his yellow-tinted somewhat Spanish countenance. He resembled a marquis of Southern France. He was more obviously a Strauss than either of his brothers. As Johann copied the Emperor Franz Josef, as Josef arranged his hair in the manner of Franz Liszt, so Eduard's head very conspicuously resembled that of Napoleon III.

He had wanted to become a diplomat; his talent for foreign languages, his veiled way of expressing himself, the art with which he would make a point against an opponent without the latter's

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becoming aware of it immediately—all this predestined him to successful progress at the Consular Academy. But he dropped these ambitions when he took up his duties in the family orchestra.

He had very little timidity to overcome, he had excellent nerves. Of the three brothers Strauss he was the least productive, but he was the healthiest and therefore the best manual worker. In common with his father he was extremely conscientious in regard to every note, he was implacable in matters of discipline, and on the other hand, extraordinarily patient. Johann and Josef no longer possessed the tranquillity necessary to combat the intrigues of the ball promoters or to cope judiciously with the flood of new musical contributions to the programs. Eduard Strauss was the most industrious and the most placid of the brothers. He was the cement in the orchestra. It was due to him that after Josef's death in 1870 it was not scattered to the four winds. For by that time Johann had already become a guest-conductor in his own orchestra and no longer took any interest in its administrative affairs. The fact that Eduard led the Strauss orchestra till the year 1901, that is until he himself was sixty-six, was a proof of a durability exceeding his father's. It is strange how in the three sons the qualities of the elder Strauss appear in stronger form; Johann was the sun of the trio, Josef the melancholy moon and Eduard the solid earth.

As a rule women are drawn to actors more strongly than to other men. Of the brothers Strauss Eduard was women's favorite because he not only was a conductor but he acted the part as well. There was no hidden cleft between his play and his life. One could not imagine him sighing like Johann or really sad like Josef. He never appeared to be tired and his smile was famous. Accentuated by his parted beard and his shining bow-tie his smile made Eduard a component part of Viennese happiness. He was *der schöne Edi*.

When Eduard had studied theory under Preyer and Sechter and

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the violin under the inevitable Amon, he made his first appearance in the Dianabad on February 5, 1859. There was a history attached to the Dianabad. It had been founded in the building rush of the Empire period, in Napoleon's coronation year 1804, and had been intended by its owners Hummel and the architect Moreau as a fashionable swimming school. But soon the owners were overtaken by the same fate as later Franz Morawetz with his swimming hall in the Sofienbad. The Viennese were not so anxious for physical culture as one had hoped. So the Dianabad too was used for balls and concerts. Eduard's debut was at a monster festival. All three Strauss orchestras were playing. Or rather, the orchestra was divided into three groups, each of which was conducted by one of the Strauss brothers. On this one evening they played 14 waltzes, 10 quadrilles, 9 polkas *françaises*, 8 polka-mazurkas and some extras, fifty dances in all. For the final gallop (the "chuckerout") all the orchestras played together.

Did Eduard compose too? Of course he did. Once the great kitchen stove was lighted, he too had to bake his pancakes and he did it with a great deal of grace and good knowledge of the ingredients. Sometimes at the concerts he gave at home and abroad, the composer of a waltz would be merely designated as "Strauss" and then only the initiated knew and the masses were never informed whether the waltz in question was by Johann, by Josef or by Eduard. It had been the same with the great artist families of the Italian renaissance. They were not at all particular as to which son or which nephew had painted this or that picture. All that mattered was that the brushwork and the insight should be of the recognized quality.

Where Eduard appeared nothing ever went wrong. When Johann went for a walk in Vienna and bought some trifle in a shop, not having the money with him to pay for it, he would say

ironically to the pretty salesgirl, "Oh yes, you are quite safe in sending the things home to me. I am Edi Strauss' brother . . ."

Eduard experienced the greatest triumph of his life in London. Queen Victoria, who knew something about men, singled him out conspicuously. She said, "You remind me very much of your father, Mr. Strauss. It seems like yesterday that he played at my Coronation Ball. I remember the pieces. Could you play some of them?" And yet that event had happened fifty-six years before. The meeting with a Strauss had implanted itself in the heart of the Queen and when Eduard played the violin, Victoria grew young again.

## 8

*Waltzes and Destinies*

*It often happened that my partner and I, dancing to the magical music of Johann Strauss, would stop in order to follow into the infinite that inspired dreaming. It almost seemed to us a desecration to allow such melodies to be resolved into a physical pleasure.*

ALEXANDRE DUMAS, PÈRE

## THE RINGSTRASSE AND THE EXTENSION OF THE WALTZ

On April 24, 1854, the Emperor Franz Josef had married Elizabeth of Bavaria. Elizabeth was his cousin. Herewith the bonds between Habsburg and South Germany had been reinforced.

An important consequence of the inclinations of the Austrian Emperor towards Bavaria was the construction of the railway joining Vienna to South Germany: the K. K. Elizabethbahn or Westbahn. And the consequence of the railway was that the Bavarian bourgeoisie discovered western Austria, the Alps, the Salzkammergut and Salzburg as a summer holiday district.

Here we have a typical case of the development of culture in Austria. The dynasty starts something and the imitative bourgeoisie continues it. The only remarkable thing in this case was



that the aristocracy was, as it were, left out. Railways are democratic, the death of exclusivity. In 1798, Bernadotte had written from Vienna to Paris that Austria was under absolute government by the aristocracy. Sixty years later the great old aristocratic families had given way to the bourgeoisie. These families were still rich and continued to live on their great country estates or in their city palaces. But they had lost their hold on the patronage of culture, painting, music and architecture. At the head of all that was to be encouraged stood the Emperor and the bankers.

The symbol of the new epoch was the Ringstrasse in Vienna. This street girdle was opened by Franz Josef on May 1, 1865. The Ringstrasse, sixty meters broad and more than nine kilometers long, completed the Emperor's architectural plans for Vienna that had originally aroused such strong protests. It is not a circle but an ellipse which, like a Roman arena, rests on the upright of the Franz-Josefs-Kai.

The Ringstrasse was the rock on which differing opinions split. The older Viennese could never forgive the destruction of the old city gates in favor of such an ostentatious street. Its construction had meant the death of the Rotenturmtor, the Kärntnertor, the Stuben-and-Burgtor, the Schottentor. There is something mysterious about gates. They are the dividing line between all that is within and all that is without and to some people's way of thinking their abolition seems to destroy something vital. There was some reason in these objections, for the Ringstrasse was too ambitious in design. It was not merely a symbol of the new direction which was to be taken and for which there was as yet no sufficient economic basis. It was also too immense in its proportions. There could be no doubt that the historian of a later century gazing at the Ring would conclude that it had been conceived and completed in the same decade in which the operas of Richard Wagner met with their first success.

As in Wagnerian musical drama, there are to be found in the palaces on the Ring, renaissance and Gothic styles cheek by jowl with romantic and baroque features. It is a real medley with no attempt at uniformity. Next to the Grecian Parliament built by the Danish architect Theophil Hansen who had studied at Athens stands the Town Hall in Gothic style; then comes the Museum, a New Renaissance palace by Hasenauer. The builders of the immense stone-heaps on the outskirts wasted a great deal of space, while the Opera House, the most beautiful of them all, built by Siccardsburg and Van der Nüll, is constructed within such narrow confines that the beholder feels it must shortly be beaten to pieces by the waves of traffic.

The palaces on the Ring are not only too vast, they are spoilt by a mistaken conception of art prevalent at the time they were built. It was not considered artistic for a building to reveal its purpose by its architecture. The famous architect Gottfried Semper, for example, seriously entertained the opinion that a house "like a guest at a ball must be externally covered by a domino so that it cannot be recognized immediately." In a conversation with Richard Wagner, Semper even found fault with *Tristan* because the characters reveal their tragedy and their destiny with such complete clarity. He asserted that it was one's duty "to don an unrevealing mask." And it is certainly true that the buildings on the Ring did so with every success. Nobody would take the Stock Exchange for what it is, and even the Burgtheater does not look like a theater from the outside.

But the Ring remained great, exuberant, a source of infinite vitality. Through his construction of the Ringstrasse, the young Emperor practically forced on the Viennese a new conception of the universe and a new attitude to himself.

Johann Strauss did not have to force anybody. He had long ago attained to the settled realization that he was not a sentimental

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provincial, but a man who belonged to the metropolis, to the cities of the world. As long as he was young he emphasized the difference of generation between himself and his father. Not till his fiftieth jubilee in 1894 did he with hesitating lips speak the words, "the honors that have been my portion today I owe to my predecessors, my father and Lanner. My own work represents feeble attempts to extend the form that came down to me from them . . ." He spoke those words at the age of seventy, they were not due to any champagne-aroused sentimentality. They were no more than the truth. Though he had admired his father in his youth his artistic attitude had originally been almost hostile.

This was really inevitable. The Strauss Waltz as handed down by the elder Strauss was played out. "Kaleidoscope" was what Hanslick had called it. This word was meant to denote the jerky way in which the themes followed each other. They did not merge into each other, nor were they contrasted. In his obituary notice on Father Strauss, Hanslick had said that themes ought to be fully worked out.

Young Strauss first showed his opposition to his just-deceased father on the question of harmony. Listeners in 1830 were not schooled as they were in 1850. Franz Liszt had meanwhile extended the range of tone, his modulatory unrest and excessive triads had harrowed the souls of hearers, but it had educated them. The Liszt influence makes some of the early waltzes of the younger Johann seem like experiments. They breathe an attractive dissatisfaction with himself; they were not the classical compositions he produced at a later period.

The compulsion to be clear enough for the dancers soon placed restrictions on the harmonic experiments of young Johann. When complicated harmonies swamped the melody, the dancer lost his support. The syncopating rhythms affected by the elder Strauss

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had in any case demanded concentrated attention on the part of the dancers. Sometimes they had to dance to the bass notes, because these marked the three-quarter time while the melody became excursive; sometimes for short periods they could dance to the melody if it happened to coincide with the rhythm. If to these difficulties the younger Johann were to add "revolutionary harmonies" then the dancer would soon be completely at sea.

Here then was the natural boundary. Changes in the waltz had to be accomplished not by eruptive harmonies, but by the broadening of its component parts. It would have been inorganic simply to add new themes. The extension would have to come from within, from fuller melodies. With the elder Strauss the theme hardly ever comprised more than twelve or sixteen bars. In spite of all the rhythmic temerities that his genius syncopated into them, these few bars partook of the nature of simple little songs (a b a b) like German popular strains or Italian arias. About the middle of the nineteenth century dancers were already finding the melodies of the elder Strauss too short. They were too short from within, the melodic wave in them receded too quickly. The elder Strauss was no listener. The restless excitability of his life is reflected in the excessive brevity of his invention. He was too active, too overbearing; a waltz must have feminine passages too, must show a love of surrender, a passive desire not to stop. Lanner's waltzes were much more feminine, but they were *Ländler*. It was Johann the Younger who wrote long waltzes in which the masculine melody of wooing was interwoven with the feminine melody of surrender. It was not only Wagner who believed in the endless melody which fills the world at all times. Strauss too believed quite simply that every waltz creation is merely a question of having made visible parts of the endlessly flowing waltz stream in the ether. And so it would have been wrong for his waltz to leave a nervous, an abrupt im-

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pression, to begin when his baton was raised and end when it sank. That was what his father's waltzes had done. The son was calmer, broader, more ingenious and had greater faith in melody.

From an artistic-social point of view however, the extension of the waltz effected by Johann the Younger was a vindication of his father's honor. Johann the Elder had always longed to make of the waltz an independent form of music which should transcend its use as a guide for the feet and grow up to be pure music, void of any utilitarian purpose. And how he had suffered in spite of his world fame from the idiocy of lesser professional musicians who would shrug their shoulders and treat him with contempt. As late as in 1836 the *National Encyclopedia of the Austrian Imperial State*, though it mentioned his fame had disparaged it. ("Through the ever-ready enthusiasm of correspondence and journalists the acclamation of J. Strauss soars to ridiculous dithyrambic heights"). The article added the terse sentence, "So far he has accomplished nothing serious." And in the case of Josef Lanner, the Association of Viennese Musicians had gone so far (in 1830) as to reject him as a member "because he was occupied with dance music."

Thus there existed in the dance creations of Strauss Junior, among many other elements, the desire to avenge his father. These compositions in their melodious length reach out far beyond any ballroom. Strauss Junior's waltz introduction grew longer as he grew older. His father's introductions had already awakened some astonishment. Possibly both were more or less consciously animated by a desire to annoy the dancers. The son in particular in the middle and towards the end of his life (in *Wein, Weib und Gesang* and in the *Kaiserwalzer*) incorporated into these long introductions such perfect command and expression of absolute form that respect almost kept the dancers from dancing when they were over.

Nevertheless the introductions were not capricious. They arose out of the basic theme of the waltz itself. They were symphonic. The waltz style of the Younger Strauss tended towards the sonata, the *sinfonietta*. No longer was one theme unrelated to the others. Varied and modulated, combined, reflected and supplemented, as is taught by the higher forms of music—that is how Strauss the Younger built up his waltzes. He went far beyond his self-taught father. But these forms of production in which so much artistic understanding is brought to fruition seem to occur quite unintentionally. The older he grew, the farther he departed from the experimental styles of youth. He inclined more and more to the cantilena and on account of his melodies was in 1860 called the German Verdi.

### JETTY TREFFZ

It is impossible to think of Father Strauss as seated. In all the pictures we have of him he is standing. Extreme fatigue characterizes the expression of his eyes. He was not at home in the salons of the great, much as they loved him; he played there, but he never ceased to be the *petit bourgeois*. The pictures of the younger Johann give a different impression. He has the repose of the genuine *habitué*, of the second generation in which traces of a lowly origin have been obliterated.

Vienna in the sixties had grown elegant again. Newly acquired wealth brought its owners into contact with the theaters, with music and pictures. Each industrialist family had as it were a balcony which led out into the life of art. It was the day of the Wertheimsteins and the Schnappers, of Tedesco, Sina, Biedermann, Figdor, Sichrowsky and Königswarter families. In the salons of this bourgeoisie of the Ringstrasse, upholstered in dark red and gold, where hung oil-paintings by Carl Rahl, *débutants* mixed with people at the summit of their careers. A pupil at the

Court Opera might meet there the Imperial Director of Operas, where over tea and cake she could have a private word with him. The talented but unsuccessful painter would make the acquaintance of the future buyers of his portraits and landscapes. Gentle pressure would be applied in the right places to regulate the scales of success. A word spoken in this ear or that would be influential in smoothing paths or blocking them efficiently. Politics were taboo. Never has there been an epoch in the metropolis of a world empire which was so entirely unpolitical. Slander and passion found their outlet in art. Interest in art reached pyramidal heights, but its objects were in the main unworthy. Literature and the theater can hardly flourish when interest is focussed on them alone. On the contrary, art grows sturdier when it is fed on a diet of political and social ideas.

The financial type preponderated in the salons of the sixties. Masculine attitudes were as nonchalant in society as on the Stock Exchange. Signs of emotion were suppressed as in England. No longer did people sit upright on their chairs, or wear uncomfortable high stocks. There was a careless, voluptuous neglect of the forms of yesterday. As Vienna had spread out and outgrown the demolished bastions, so the man of the sixties exploded the prejudices of bourgeoisdom. In Schubert's songs and Schwind's pictures country sights and sounds had been transplanted into the city. In the sixties, the reverse happened: Vienna, in a frenzy of building overflowed into the country. Art grew municipal and everything municipal began to be looked upon as art. It was not that Paris modes were being copied, but that a parallel money-induced development was taking place in Vienna. Money and the manner in which it was made influenced both form in architecture and the structure of society.

The gesture of the race-horse-owner—head thrown back—was

characteristic of this period. Society had no aesthetic depth and was too much inclined to take chances. It was a period of bets, of the totalisator, of competition in non-essentials. But it was not barbaric. No period is barbaric unless it places a low value on its artists; the sixties inclined to over-valuation. Artists were too carefully safeguarded by the financial patrons who would not allow their protégés to occupy themselves with anything but art. As far removed from politics as from nature, this decade of the sixties was the elder brother of the seventies and the eighties in which Makart painted his airless and unproblematic pictorial riots. A little more barbarism might have made all these contemporaries into greater artists. But there was nothing to struggle against except intrigue. Among the remarkable men whose talent remained untarnished in spite of the general tendency to deterioration were Richard Wagner, Friedrich Hebbel and Johann Strauss. Strauss' survival was not due to his Schubert-like wells of inspiration alone. It was assisted by his meeting with a woman. In the midst of the questionable self-fructification of art by art he encountered a great nature in the singer Jetty Treffz.

Baron Eduard Tedesco and his wife, Sofie, played an important part in society. Among their guests were to be found such men as Bauernfeld, L. A. Frankl, Laube, Kompert and Saar. Their bourgeois home was joined for social purposes to the household of Baron Moritz Tedesco, although it was the Baron's mistress, Jetty Treffz the singer, who presided over the latter. The same guests visited at both houses. In the year 1830 this would hardly have been possible; but in the year 1860 the aristocracy and bourgeoisie decided to ignore the irregularity, the bohemianism of Baron Moritz Tedesco's household.

It was well worth while for high society to make an exception in this case. The woman with the beautiful hair and the warm



eyes, no longer young, was a singer of high rank. She had been born in Vienna as the daughter of a silversmith, but had had early leanings toward the South German capitals. Through her grandmother she was descended from that Margarethe Schwan of Mannheim who had once inspired Schiller to write his "Laura" poems. The Saxon Court had had Jetty Treffz trained by Gentiluomo; she was hardly fifteen when she appeared with Schröder-Devrient in the Dresden Opera. In Leipzig, Mendelssohn dedicated songs to her. Shortly afterwards she experienced her first Viennese triumphs. Then came a professional journey to England where she was greatly applauded and compared to Jenny Lind. Jenny Lind and Jetty Treffz—the similarity of sound was in itself a temptation to place the Swedish nightingale side by side with the German.

All this Henriette abandoned at the age of forty for Moritz Tedesco. She never omitted to point out that the Baron, who became the father of her two daughters, would certainly have married her if he had not promised his dying father to remain a Jew. At that time there was no civil marriage in Austria. Either the Baron would have had to be baptized as a Catholic in order to marry Henriette, or she would have had to become a Jewess. They desired neither of these alternatives. This, so Viennese society was told, was the reason why they did not marry.

Jetty was a clever woman and a good hostess. She led a placid life in the shelter of the millionaire's home until she made the acquaintance of Johann Strauss. They fell in love immediately and played the parts of Tristan and Isolde to Tedesco's King Mark. Strauss was thirty-seven at the time, almost ten years younger than Jetty. He was as deeply in love with her as his father had been with Emilie Trampusch. But whereas Father Strauss had soiled his reputation, wasted his money and lowered himself socially by his infatuation, Johann the Younger gained in every way by his

marriage to Jetty Treffz. She was his superior, not only socially, but also in experience and knowledge of human nature. Perhaps Johann Strauss would not have ventured to propose to her at all if there had not been that slight stain on her of being Tedesco's mistress. But as a trifling blemish only enhances the beauty of a peach, so this fact drew the suitor. Moreover, Jetty was a singer and the aura of the opera still encompassed her. Possibly the thought shot through Strauss at the time that at Jetty's side he would be able to escape from his enslavement to dance music. It was a marriage for love, but it was a sensible marriage too.

Very few people observed their instantaneous mutual attraction. But this soon grew to such proportions that Jetty, finding herself incapable of bearing the secret any longer, sought out Baron Tedesco and confessed everything. All she wanted was to be allowed to go. With the magnanimity of a King Mark, he not only let her go but made a very generous settlement on her. When all their difficulties had thus melted away, the lovers grew superstitiously afraid that some unforeseen disturbance would prevent their marriage. They told no one of their plans and on their wedding morning went into the St. Stefans Cathedral in their everyday clothes. They had intimate friends as witnesses. Nobody else attended the wedding. All this secrecy was probably due to the strange timidity that alternated in the life of Johann Strauss with exuberant buoyancy, the same dread of publicity which his father, darling of the public as he was, had often shown. But the exuberance was not lacking on this occasion either. A few hours before the wedding the happy bridegroom wrote the following light-hearted note to his unsuspecting publisher whom he wanted as a witness: "Will you come to me to-morrow morning at 7 o'clock and assist me at a wedding one hour later? Answer at once, you poor dupe of a music-dabbler!"

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### THE HOUSE IN HIETZING

When Johann came home from the church there was a surprise for him. His mother came up to him with a parcel saying that it was his wedding present. When Johann had unpacked the parcel he was amazed to find that it contained bank notes to the value of sixty thousand gulden. His mother explained that it was his own money. Unsuspected by Strauss, one of his aunts, Josefine Waber in St. Petersburg, had played treasurer for him and had secretly laid aside some of the money he had made in Russia. Now it formed his marriage portion.

Jetty Strauss-Treffz standing by his side sensed the importance of this little scene. From now on it would be her duty to look after business matters. Till then Johann had been dependent on his mother for everything. She had been his confidante and manager. Anna Strauss did not find it easy to hand over these duties to another woman. She said nothing to disturb the marriage, but inwardly she objected both to the bride's age and to her history. She was a *petite bourgeoise*, who did not understand the customs of the salon Tedesco. She would have been amazed if she had known then that one of the daughters of Jetty Treffz and Tedesco was to marry a Prince Liechtenstein and the other a Count Wimpffen.

This marriage made Johann Strauss rich. It was the first time that such a thing had happened to a member of the Strauss family. Henriette utilized the new situation to tear Johann away from his obligations as a conductor. From now on he was only to conduct in exceptional cases. No longer was he to have permanent contracts with the owners of ball-rooms. Eduard and Josef were to take over the uncongenial work of conducting and Johann was to spend the time and energy thus saved in deepening his own work as a composer.

Hanslick once said of the symphonic waltzes that he had been

the first to demand that "they could no longer be called dance music" and occasionally spoke disparagingly of them as "waltz requiems." The criticism is probably just, as after the middle of the sixties Johann would often keep away from ballrooms for months at a time. He was at length able to conceive waltzes as absolute music, liberated from the thralldom of the dance. His father had only dreamed of such a possibility. Never had Strauss had so much time. Guarded by love and prosperity, his creative powers collected in deep reservoirs. The villa inhabited by him and his wife in Hietzing became a symbol of his life.

It lay west of the city, close to the park walls of the Imperial Palace at Schönbrunn. It was some time since the social trend in Europe had been set westwards. In London, Paris, St. Petersburg, Berlin, as also in Vienna and Buda-Pesth, the villadom of the rich consistently expanded towards the west. The explanation given was that, having regard to the direction usually taken by the wind, the western quarters of a city were less exposed to the smoke of factories; but this explanation seems questionable. Suffice it to say that by the purchase of the villa in Hietzing, Johann Strauss too became a "westerner." It was a little yellow sandstone house with green shutters, two-storeyed and with gilt railings. Johann Strauss probably met the complete transformation of his life with the same nonchalance as Richard Wagner. Poverty did not suit Johann. The self-contradictory life of his father, who saw immeasurable wealth and yet was himself almost in want, was a warning. He had no desire to follow his example.

From the whitewashed hall on the ground floor round which two magnificent mastiffs might often be seen chasing each other, a carpeted staircase led to the living rooms. These were for the most part papered in dark red, a color for which Richard Wagner too had had a great affection. A large writing-desk, on which there was a cylindrical file of music-sheets; two powerful lamps;

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an oil portrait of Saphir, the most influential of all journalists, whose dithyrambic praise had once smoothed Strauss' path; richly carved mirrors everywhere; furniture of gold and rosewood, enormous laurel wreaths—this was Johann Strauss' environment.

Silver braiding with laudatory inscriptions was attached to the wreaths and if the eye of a visitor happened to be caught by these trophies, Strauss would say in some embarrassment, "Please do not laugh at me if my house looks like the apartment of a ballerina. My dear wife likes it like that . . ." This was probably only half true. Johann Strauss loved the traditional, and fame is a very beautiful tradition.

Eisenberg, the earliest of Strauss' biographers, tells us that when the streets of Hietzing were wrapped in the silence of the night, Strauss would sit in his dark-red armchair busily writing at his desk by the light of numerous candles. Sometimes he would spring up quickly and play a few notes on the dainty pianino. Then there would resound in the night, hesitating and as if astonished at themselves, tones that in their delicate power were destined to course through the whole world.

### BY THE BEAUTIFUL BLUE DANUBE

There was more musical talent in Vienna than elsewhere, but it was undisciplined, purposeless. Dilettantism produced much that was in poor taste, and the advantages of music in the home, to which all and sundry would contribute, had long been outweighed by its disadvantages.

Into this lukewarm pursuit of music came Johann Herbeck as purifier. Herbeck was self-taught and had really intended to become a lawyer. His discovery on behalf of the Viennese was Schubert. Incredible as it may sound, Schubert was forgotten. Herbeck brought him back to the concerts and unearthed unknown minor

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works of the Master's. The impertinent reaction of contemporary journalistic Vienna may be seen in a so-called witty verse on Schubert's oratorio *Lazarus*.

In raising Lazarus from the dead  
The Saviour spent extreme endeavor.  
Franz Schubert knocks him on the head  
And keeps him singing on for ever.

But finally Herbeck had his way. And music returned from its excursion into society to its proper place among the arts.

By 1856, Johann Herbeck had become choir-master of the Viennese Men's Choral Association. "The establishment of this association," says Hanslick, "is an event that cannot be properly appreciated without a knowledge of conditions as they were before March." Whereas in Berlin the first German glee clubs had been founded by Zelter in 1808 and soon afterwards in every German city, there existed in Austria no glee clubs at all; this in spite of the fact that next to Italy, Austrians had the most beautiful and the purest natural singing voices. Shivering terror on the part of the police had prevented the establishment of such societies in Austria. "Male singing meant revolution." When in 1843 August Schmitt established the germ-cell of the association, Metternich is said to have requested the Prefect of Police in all seriousness "to repress this poison sent to us from Germany . . ." It was not till five years later, in the year of the Viennese revolution, that male singing had come through its troubles and was looked on as a matter of course.

The canker at the root of the new society was its humdrum repertoire. Schubert was not sung nor was Mendelssohn, but works by lesser men and dilettantes filled the programs. The bad public in Vienna which in 1846 prepared an icy reception for Robert

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Schumann and his wife, apparently wanted nothing better. Herbeck, however, and Otto Nicolai exercised compulsion. Herbeck in particular suffered greatly from the inferior choral material. He found glorious voices and nothing for them to sing. This crying need made him turn to Johann Strauss, the most melodious man of the epoch, with the request that he compose a choral waltz. All he really wanted was the music; he had a tame poet who would write the words.

It was to be a carnival waltz, full of movement and gaiety. This was in February, 1867. Strauss obeyed. In the midst of his creative work, between fragments of other waltzes, he held fast to one of the inspirations which came to him so effortlessly. He allowed a beautiful rotating motif



to bubble up within him. Little streams from left and right added their contributions. The swaying *glissades* became more majestic, richer, more irresistible:



At that time Strauss was not yet living in Hietzing but in the Praterstrasse, not far from that old Danube the smell of whose waters had been wafted to his nostrils in his childhood. A poem was running through his head at the time. It was by Karl Isidor Beck, a restless little man who had experienced all kinds of things since his birth in 1817. Karl Gutzkow had once assessed him as the "German Byron." He had written social poems in a very beautiful hand. He partially concealed an unhealthy-looking face behind very strong spectacles.

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The poem by Karl Beck which seemed to be calling to Strauss had a very beautiful refrain. It was a love song, possibly addressed to Vienna herself, possibly to a Viennese woman:

And I saw thee, gracious, youthful,  
Bearing yet a world of pain,  
Where our hearts are ever truthful,  
Where our gold has ever lain,  
By the Danube, beautiful blue Danube.

Once again my heart's a bower  
Shelt'ring blossoms sweet and new;  
Arid shrubs burst into flower,  
Nightingales are singing too  
By the Danube, beautiful blue Danube.

Who had ever seen the Danube blue? It is a pale green, reed-colored river, sometimes it is grey, often silvery but never blue. Beck's refrain made it blue, and it remained blue for Strauss who was captivated by the picture, by the rippling sound of the words "beautiful blue Danube."

Many of Johann Strauss' waltzes express nothing but radiant joy. They have no particular subject-matter and their titles are little else than signs by which they are known. There is nothing programmatic about their content. But the Danube waltz is a different matter. The very first motif, developing from the D major triad D-F sharp-A, only to glide away again, suggests flowing waters. The *Blue Danube*, however, is not a descriptive waltz. There is no pictured background of churches, villages, hills and vineyards. Nor is there any hint of the historical memories that might be suggested by the great flowing thoroughfare that since antiquity has carried western culture towards the east. For all that the waltz sings of the Danube.

Perhaps one must be a swimmer to realize this. Right at the beginning comes the rippling sound generated by the play of the



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waters on the river's bottom. Every swimmer knows it. It appears as the basic tone in the introduction and continues for twenty-two bars. The melody is as it were under water.

Then it comes to the surface and the body of the river becomes one with the body of the swimmer. The swift Danube pouring through the Wachau towards Vienna has two movements. One is the straight forward flow and the other the waltzing movement of the little waves and whirlpools. In narrowing and widening circles river and waltz flow downwards. The composer contented himself with these two movements. He had no desire to endow his waltz with more impressionism.

This composition was given by Herbeck to the poet of the Men's Choral Association; his name was Josef Weyl. Weyl was to put words to it. Weyl, in whom there was still some of the spirit of the preceding political years, in which libretti were used to convey matters that might not be discussed in editorials most inappropriately gave vent to this spirit in the innocuous Danube waltz. And so the members of the Association were faced with the task of learning the following dialogue between two semi-choirs:

"Vienna, be gay!"  
"And what for, pray?"  
"A glimmer of light—"  
"With us it's night!"  
"Carnival's come!"  
"Ho-ho, ha-hum!"  
"Well, why court sorrow?  
There's still to-morrow,  
so laugh and be merry!"

There was almost a riot among the singers when they were obliged to study this and they did not disassociate the melody from the words. Nikolaus Dumba, a patron of the arts to whom the waltz was dedicated, and Herbeck himself took pains to calm

the men as Johann Strauss was not to know how valueless they thought the whole thing.

Why were the words not jettisoned? Because in the main they were not so very silly after all. Several things had happened since Vienna had celebrated its last carnival; the deep depression felt by all the world was reflected in Weyl's bad verses.

Like a swift summer thunderstorm, war had broken out between Prussia and Austria in 1866. Before Europe had time to wipe its eyes, it was over; it had ended for Vienna with a catastrophic defeat. In spite of great victories against the Prussians' Italian allies, the Austrians had been completely destroyed near Königgrätz in the north. All that had taken four weeks. Four weeks, and the whole of Germany lay at the feet of victorious Prussia. Four weeks, and the bonds of a thousand years which had kept Austria the protector of southern Germany, had been wrenched apart. In a material sense, the defeat was not of any great importance. The State was not bankrupt and there was no famine. It was only terrible in a moral sense.

A shadow lies over the Austrian soul to the present day, a constant resentment of treatment felt to be unjust. It began then. It was then that the State was forced to take the first steps on the path that led it to become a Slav instead of a German outpost. This was to be its undoing. Even in northern Germany this victory was not popular. No single poem commemorates it. Deeply ashamed, the Berlin intelligentsia refrained from comment; and when four years later King Wilhelm set out to do battle with France, Geibel thus addressed him:

Lead us on to better pathways,  
You who conquered Austria's hosts.

Popular sentiment regarded the victory over Austria as un-beautiful.

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The first response to the lost war by the art world of Vienna was a monster concert given a few weeks after peace was concluded, the net profits of which were to be devoted to the families of the fallen. All the choral societies comprising about 1,200 men united under the leadership of Herbeck. The concert took place in the Imperial Winter Riding School and here the singers did their best to drown the memory of the defeat. From an aesthetic point of view Hanslick considered the whole concert a failure. Increasing numbers in the choirs could heighten the effect only up to a point approximately comparable to the chemical conception of saturation. But when this point had been passed the acoustic impression remained at a standstill and the aesthetic effect decreased. Grillparzer had said: "If a thing is monstrous that does not make it great."

The Austrian soul had been too deeply wounded by recent events for monster concerts to be able to effect a cure. In any case people were beginning to ask whether the defeat of the army had not been the fault of absolutism in the highest circles. In the midst of loyal Imperial Vienna dissatisfaction began to make itself felt and there was a general atmosphere of discomfort. It was this which was precipitated in Josef Weyl's feeble poem:

"A glimmer of light—"  
"With us it's night!"

The accompanying waltz was by Strauss. People liked it because nothing by Strauss could displease them. And yet they liked it far too little. It was only repeated once, and that, measured by Strauss successes, really meant failure. At a ball the evening before, that is on February 12th, at the festival of the Viennese "Concordia," Strauss had had his *Telegramme* performed; and only five days later he brought out his wonderful *Künstlerleben*. He had neither the wish nor the time to concern himself greatly with the fate of

one particular waltz. He is said to have shrugged his shoulders and to have observed to Josef, "The devil take the waltz, I am only sorry about the Coda, I could have wished success to that."

Nothing then indicated that the *Blue Danube* would become the greatest popular success that has ever been the lot of a piece of music in the whole of musical history. Six months after the original performance, packing-cases filled with the *Blue Danube* were sent out into the whole world from the Viennese publishing house of Spina. Copper-plates were in use at that date and a single plate was sufficient for a popular piece of music. That meant 10,000 copies. For the *Blue Danube* no less than 100 plates were needed. Even Asia and Australia had to be provided with copies.

Politics had prevented the immediate success of the *Blue Danube* in Vienna and politics were responsible for its fantastic success elsewhere. Its universal fame began in Paris.

#### THE WORLD EXHIBITION IN PARIS

In 1867, Napoleon III assembled the power and glory of the world around his already tottering throne. The Parisian World Exhibition reflected the mad splendor of the Second Empire for the last time. The Exhibition was a miracle. Andersen, the contemporary Danish genius, sang its praises: "... like a table spread for Christmas with magic parcels. There are parcels here of industry, of wealth, of art. Around them are exhibited trifles from all countries, playthings for adults. Here every nation remembers its home with a smile . . . All the entrances bear the flag of France; around the world-bazaar wave the flags of the nations. Humming is heard from the halls that shelter the engines. From the towers the bells softly send their peals to earth. With the tones of the church organs are mingled hoarse nasal chants from the oriental cafés. It is the realm of Babel—a wonder of the world."

All the nations competed in this magnificent show. One of the

most important centers was that which housed the Austrian Embassy. It was ruled over by a son of Metternich's who was very different from his father. This was Prince Richard, and by his side was the Countess Pauline Metternich-Sandor, his wife.

Austria's policy in Paris was at that time exceedingly difficult. Two defeats lay behind her. The first had been sustained in 1859 against France supported by the Italians. The terrible, deadly battle at Solferino was the result. The second catastrophe was the battle against the Prussians. It had been at Königgrätz and was not quite a year old.

It was the duty of Prince Richard Metternich to rescue Austrian policy from this situation and lead it into new paths. He was a Liberal with strong mental reservations against Prusso-Russo-Austrian absolutism, but he was capable of concealing these reservations very effectively. Sparkling with social talents and a delightful pianist he was the first of his species, typical of many later Austrian ambassadors. He was really the founder of the custom of representing his country in a foreign land in the capacity of a *maitre de plaisir*. This was very well-suited to the French Imperial Court. People would glide past each other in a light political quadrille at a series of opulent balls, theatrical evenings and hunting lunches. When Napoleon III and Prince Richard Metternich glanced casually into each others eyes, they could both read there that it would be better for France and for Austria if they remained friends for a while. Prussia had become too strong.

The active force in this was mainly Richard's wife, the Princess Pauline. She was the daughter of the Hungarian jockey Sandor. Family history tells of him the characteristic story that even at his own funeral he made the horses shy. They smashed his coffin against the walls of the cemetery. His daughter Pauline Sandor, though she had not inherited his riding frenzy, had all his boldness; hers was the gaiety adored by all Parisians. She was the con-

fidential adviser of the beautiful Empress Eugénie. Pauline Metternich was not beautiful, at the Court she was known as a *belle-laide* who turned everybody's head with her charming caprices. When Napoleon III at a winter festival came up to her masked and in the costume of a Bedouin in a white burnous, she, having recognized him, called out, "Where did you, a poor robber, procure so many jewels for the handle of your dagger?" The next day he sent her the dagger.

The great festival that the Austrians gave in May, 1867, to celebrate the world exhibition excelled, if only for political reasons, the festivals of the other nations. The Viennese Government had granted 165,000 francs for the purpose. Before it took place Pauline consulted with the director of municipal works, an Alsatian named Alphand. Together they planned an enormous ball-room leading to the garden of the Embassy, with walls of white and gold and hangings of pink and green satin. The candelabras were ships full of flowers, candles rising up in their midst. Predominant among the flowers was the geranium, the French infantry color, the blazing red of which was designed to honor the French guests. Plants were crowded on the staircase pillars and in all the corners. Immense mirrors brought as it were the gardens into the house. A giant waterfall cascaded in the midst of the Embassy Hall over tens of thousands of roses without wetting them, and this delighted Their French Majesties. But who could describe Pauline's indignation when among the foreign potentates she espied the Crown Prince of Prussia. He too was a visitor to the World Exhibition, and so it was an act of politeness that he should appear for a short time at the Austrian Ball. The lady of the house should have been prepared for this and for his conventional assurance that he was so happy to be present. It was possible, she sighed later into her diary, that the Crown Prince was happy. "I was certainly not happy at all."

The sensation at this ball was Strauss. The Count d'Osmont had invited him to Paris. This Frenchman—one-armed since he had been wounded in a duel—was well known as a Wagnerian, but he was also among the fervent admirers of Johann Strauss. Like Richard Metternich he now patronized the artists. Strauss' playing aroused admiration, but he had come without his own orchestra. Moreover, he was playing in France for the first time and it turned out that he was unfamiliar with French tempi. He played the waltzes too quickly for the French; they liked their *valse lente*. On the other hand they wanted their quadrilles speeded up. Princess Metternich went up to Strauss and asked him to "*hâter la mesure*." That would hardly have happened to his father, who always sensed what his public wanted.

It was almost to the day thirty years since the father's victorious career in Paris had begun. But no similar victory seemed to be in store for his son. The world was too full, the cultural offerings in Paris too numerous. There was a world exhibition, there were a thousand things to be seen. The general breathlessness was demonstrated by the fact that d'Osmont paraded Paris for days without being able to find a hall in which Strauss could give a concert. Finally they hit on the idea of renting a hall in the Exhibition itself, in the "Cercle International."

Here one morning the owner of the newspaper *Figaro*, Jean Hippolyte de Villemessant, chanced to hear the Berlin orchestra playing and stopped to listen. At their head stood the Austrian conductor Strauss. The situation caught his fancy: Königgrätz reversed; Berlin followers obediently submitting to the direction of a Viennese master. An article might be written about that and there were attractive politico-cultural possibilities about it. Villemessant, the son of a Colonel, fifty-six years of age, was the type of the unobjectionable literary pugilist, feared but courted. He had already founded half a dozen newspapers in all manner of intel-

lectual styles and had seen them expire in consequence of libel suits and prohibitions; then he was successful in founding the *Figaro*, the politico-literary journal which at first appeared twice a week, but shortly before the exhibition had begun to appear daily. Villemessant too had been at the Metternich ball, and he was aware of Prince Richard's plan to bring Austria into closer contact with France. The *Figaro* under his management was not a government paper; on the contrary Napoleon III was attacked in its pages as often as possible. But in the political circles served by the *Figaro* the idea of closer contact between France on the one hand and Austria and Southern Germany on the other was popular too. M. Villemessant smiled and went to his office where he proceeded to consult selected members of his staff such as Edmond About, Espès, Scholl, Jouvin, Villemot, Albert Wolff. The result was that in the first week of June there began a continuous stream of notices, swelling to a torrent of propaganda, devoted to Johann Strauss. In the meanwhile Strauss had called on his patron. The Parisians are accustomed to Germans who speak bad French, who say "*Zil fous blait*" instead of "*S'il vous plait*." Strauss spoke magnificent French and he was not awkward and temperamental as his father had been. He was a perfect man of the world who had been trained for Paris by the Russian Court and the Viennese bourgeoisie. Hippolyte de Villemessant was enchanted and continued to place his editorial orchestra at the service of Strauss.

The next week he gave a Strauss soirée in all the editorial rooms. As a generation earlier the gods of the Parisian opera had expended their condescending sympathy on the tyrannical and yet timid father, so the new generation came to see the more urbane son. The great ones of literature came to Strauss on that festive occasion. Turgenieff and Gustave Flaubert came to shake hands with the writer of waltzes, the man who represented a cheerful Germany, the ambassador of Austrian rhythms. Ambroise Thomas greeted



him, and so did Dumas the younger and Theophile Gautier. The fencer Henry Rochefort, feared by all the world, had admiring eyes like a child, and Victor Tissot, another enthusiast, later expressed what they all felt when he called the art of Johann Strauss a "delicate embroidery, full of good cheer, full of suppressed and crazily released laughter, punctuated with little arias, pirouettes and taunting railleries . . . Music that harbors the devil and leaps from the rocks in a cascade. Strauss! What magic there is in the name! To the sounds of his music courtiers and soldiers dance, town and country rotate, dainty boots and wooden shoes alike, fairies and nurserymaids. His music penetrates into the spirit and animates the feet—it is original and universal. The waltzes of Johann Strauss resound across the frontiers of our culture over to America and Australia, and in China they awaken the echoes beyond the Great Wall . . ."

These were very striking words, written as they were in a city and a year in which Offenbach was sole ruler. His *La Grande Duchesse*, a military satire, had just then had what Francisque Sarcey called "a success approaching mania." It contained all the mockery of the Parisians at the false splendor of their Court and was also imbued with a prophetic hatred of Prussian militarism. At the dress rehearsal the censor had been obliged to cut a few passages directed against the victors of Königgrätz. The fact that Strauss was one of the victims of Königgrätz was part of the reason that such a festival was prepared for him in spite of Offenbach's universal popularity. He was a victim as was the whole of Austria in whose defeat people saw an ominous shifting of the European balance of power.

And now Strauss in his turn was obliged to give a dinner in the *Cercle International* to Villemessant's whole editorial staff. With French delicacy Villemessant, usually anything but delicate, forbade Strauss to provide the wines. His ostensible reason was that

Strauss was ignorant of French vintages. In reality he wished to save Strauss expense. During dinner the orchestra played the new Strauss *Figaro Polka* dedicated to Villemessant. Later the conversation touched on the waltz called *Le Beau Danube Bleu*. Someone inquired whether it was a national hymn. It was played, this time unaccompanied by the singing of a wrathful choir. The reaction of the audience was such frenzied applause that Johann Strauss was utterly taken aback. He telegraphed to Vienna to his mother and his brothers. Jules Barbier wrote words to the melody and from then on whenever Vienna was mentioned in Paris the whole city would begin to hum:

"Fleuve d'azur  
Sur ton flot pur  
Glisse la voile  
Comme une étoile."

This atmosphere was exceedingly welcome to Prince Metternich and his wife. This little *entente cordiale* between Parisian taste and the music of Johann Strauss was a tiny stone in the mosaic of the Metternich conception. It was time for them to act. Now or never the Austrian Emperor must be induced to come to Paris. The memory of the battles of Magenta and Solferino must be buried forever, the alliance between Austria and France perfected before the World Exhibition was over. That was the strategical plan of the Metternichs to which everything was to be made subservient and in the shadow of which the *Blue Danube* waltz became a world success. As a world-famous composer Strauss said farewell to the Parisians and following an English invitation (the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, had heard him play) he traveled to London where the public made much of him. The Parisian success of *Le Beau Danube Bleu* carried everything before it. Strauss gave six great concerts in Covent Garden. In 1849 his unforgotten

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father had stood there. He honored him and did homage to England by repeating the Coronation music for Victoria and playing his own variations of English popular songs. The temperate English newspapers praised Johann Strauss to the skies; and in Vienna the publisher Spina was made overwhelmingly happy by the run on the *Blue Danube*.

Happy Strauss! His lucky star had preserved him from staying in Paris through July, when overnight a political slump occurred which threatened to destroy the tenuous threads that had been spun between France and Austria. In July the Danube waltz was heard no more, the same melody that had roused the people to enthusiasm in June. The Emperor Franz Josef had not come.

Something terrible had happened. Far away across the ocean, on June 19th, a Mexican platoon had sent five deadly shots into the body of the Emperor of Mexico. Before he had attained to that rank this Emperor had been known as the Archduke Ferdinand Max. He was Franz Josef's brother and he had gone to Mexico relying on the protection of French bayonets. He had only taken over his post on being persuaded and impelled to do so by the Emperor Napoleon. When French policy ceased to be interested in Mexico, when the expensive detachment had been recalled by Napoleon, young Ferdinand Max had been taken prisoner by his opponents and executed overnight. Like a poisoned arrow from the jungle the telegram shot into Paris. It was on the morning of June 30th, twelve days late, that Washington reported the incredible. While the Empress Eugénie was employed in handing gold and silver medals to the foreign exhibitors she heard the news and collapsed in a faint. All festivals were cancelled.

The Stock Exchange tottered, numerous Parisians who had carelessly left their money in Mexican loans, now lost it. Pain and indignation reigned in Vienna, where the Archduchess Sophie, the mother of the murdered prince, took no trouble to conceal her fury

against the French Emperor and his faithlessness. Richard Metternich's policy of bringing into closer contact Franz Josef and Napoleon on the basis of their common dislike of Prussia had failed. He did not give it up however. A plan was mooted by which Napoleon and Eugénie were to pay a visit of penitence to the Emperor's mother Sophie in Vienna; but the originators of the plan were afraid to expose the French Imperial couple to the hostility of the Viennese population. So in the end Napoleon and Eugénie went to Salzburg, arriving there on August 18th, Franz Josef's birthday. The French Empress had purposely dressed in a modest and shrinking fashion in order to give precedence before all the world to Elizabeth, the Consort of Franz Josef. In the autumn, the Emperor Franz Josef returned the visit in Paris, but without the Empress. Court mourning was very strict. The alliance between Vienna and Paris that in June had seemed to be tunelessly initiated by the Danube waltz was never concluded.

## WINE, WOMAN AND SONG

"Gifts apportioned all haphazard, happiness unjustly strewn"; twenty other waltzes had claims to world fame hardly inferior to those of the *Blue Danube*. First of all there were the *Morgenblätter*. The title refers not to leaves of trees in the early morning, but to the morning edition of the Viennese newspapers. Strauss composed the waltz for the festival ball of the journalists' association "Concordia." In competition with Offenbach, who as an honored guest in Vienna presented his *Abendblätter*, Strauss' waltz was defeated. It was not liked, and Strauss is said to have passed a night in tears.

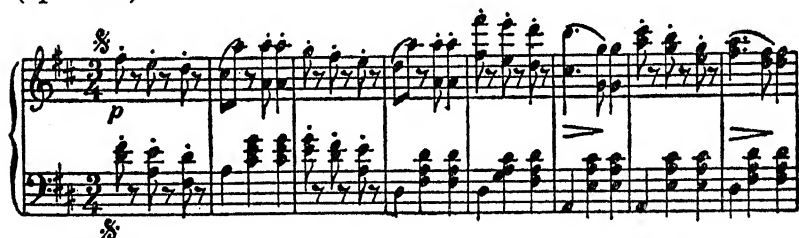
Today people like it, though its opening motif is rather sugary and artificial. Very rarely are the first themes of his waltzes the best; they are sometimes stiff and not fully awake as if the dancers had first to find their feet. In the *Morgenblätter* Strauss rises grad-

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ually to expressiveness until finally with the fourth waltz there is a rippling cascade of music:

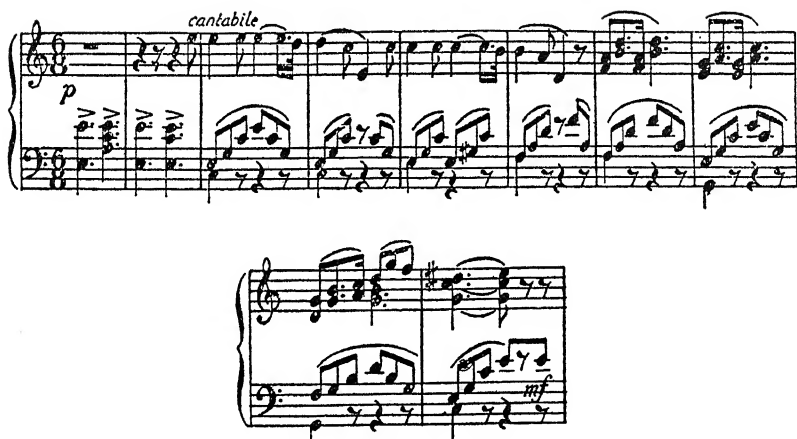


Then there is the more famous *Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald*. A few words by Friedrich Uhl might serve as the motto of its introduction. "We share with the southerner the longing for the open, we love to breathe deeply, to see the wide vault of heaven and on fine Sundays to feast in the shady woods. If the mountains look down on to the city and yet will not come to us, we must go to them . . ." But it seems to have escaped everyone's attention that the retrospective *Ländler* tempo in the *Wienerwaldgeschichten* varies a waltz by the older Strauss. This was the older waltz (opus 208):



This theme must have had a strong attraction for the younger Johann. Naming its origin he excavated it in 1864 for his *Morgenblätter*, in 1868 he made of it a main motif in the *Wienerwaldgeschichten* and a year later he remembered it once more in his *Wein, Weib und Gesang*. He used it consciously, not from lack of inspiration. Strauss waltzes often contain resemblances to each other, but they all have individual profiles which the true connoisseur cannot mistake. *Wiener Blut* (opus 354) is reminiscent of *Künstlerleben* (opus 316) written five years earlier, but nobody could mistake one for the other. In the earlier work we have the grace and lightheartedness of the artists' lives:

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while in *Wiener Blut* (Viennese Blood) we have dreamy, heavy-lidded sensuality and the flowing of a sluggish stream:



The *Rosenkavalier* waltz by Richard Strauss is dimly foreshadowed here.

As with Rubens so with Strauss the apotheosis of the flesh is unmistakable. But again as with the great painter, through Strauss' flesh tones there vibrates something entirely incorporeal, the product of intellect and soul. This trinity is apparent in all his waltzes from the middle of the sixties onwards, so that there is little justification for according exceptional rank to the *Blue Danube*.

In January, 1869, the honorary choir-master of the Viennese Men's Choral Association found a waltz on his desk, "dedicated to my friend Johann Herbeck." It was the waltz *Wein, Weib und Gesang*, Opus 333.

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In the *Blue Danube* there had been something like a hiatus between the treatment of the voice part and the rhythm. The orchestra had to decide in favor either of waltz-time or of the singers. These factors were so strongly opposed that it was finally found necessary to jettison the words, quite apart from their intrinsic worthlessness. Anyone who sings the Danube waltz takes the glide from its rhythm. It becomes jerky.

*Wein, Weib und Gesang* consists of four waltzes, an introduction and a Coda. The introduction of ninety-one bars is a work of inimitable power. It is informed by a kind of stern imagination coupled with a foretaste of the later waltz themes; one might even say that they are anticipated here, and yet that is not the essential. Rather one feels a suggestion that the waltzes will begin when the introduction has quite finished making music. Actually it is not an introduction at all but an independent instrumental movement which with the airs of a sovereign at the very last moment releases the waltzes from within itself. It is positively barbarous to perform this work as a fragment. And yet it is the rule for the waltz themes to be played, while their source is suppressed.

*Andantino*. E flat-D-C as a descending scale theme in the bass. Then the *pianissimi* of German romanticism, followed by an exquisite passage for the violoncelli. This dark-toned phrase might easily be one of Mendelssohn's.



It brings tears to our eyes. In 1869 the great Berlin master, the revivalist of German choir music, had lain in his grave for twenty-

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two years. What Weber began Mendelssohn perfected. His choral songs conjure up the scent of the beeches and pines of the German hills, the blue of the gentle slopes, the water-fed shadows of the valleys. "Who has built thee, lovely forest, lying there so high above?" That was Felix Mendelssohn. "I will praise the Master craftsman while my voice can sing of love," thus Johann Strauss greets the dead musician. The introduction continues. There comes the old German march before the gates of Nuremberg:



They are assembling, they are coming in groups with their chains of office, in black with white ruffles. Finally the jubilant outburst, *maestoso*:

"Who does not love wine, woman and song  
Remains a fool his whole life long."

Not till then may the dance begin:



Variation that it is, it begins almost shyly, until suddenly in the 27th bar there comes the bacchantic *fortissimo* leap from E flat to the G major triad.

The second waltz in an auto-quotation. The *Geschichten aus dem Wiener Wald* are repeated in a slight *ritardando*. They represent a peep into the past, a greeting from the son to his dead father. Looking back at his father he created the following motif:





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And now the waltz diverges into A flat major. A surprising *dolce*: the descending scale motif of the beginning returns—varied here as D flat-C-B flat. In the third dance this scale motif of the introduction appears again, now as C-B flat-A. Suddenly there comes an unexpected change; tripping carefree thirds take their staccato way in D minor. From now on the feet take command and beat out strongly marked bass tones.

Waltz Four: The contemplative delicate finale of the introduction returns, exalted now, as the main theme. And then the conclusion: the symphonic germ-cell again—a descending E flat-D-C. Sixths, fifths and fourths! But this time they are clangorous anapaests. Wine, woman and song. Spirit, flesh, and fantasy. The gigantic fountain has ceased to make music . . .

Seven years later Richard Wagner requested an amateur orchestra conducted by Anton Seidl to play him Strauss waltzes. It was his sixty-third birthday. The most successful summer of his life lay behind him. The decisive, busy August of 1876 had come and gone, the great festival theater in Bayreuth had opened its doors; the world had made its pilgrimage thither, by railway, by carriage and on foot. Over and above the anonymous crowd that climbed the hill of Bayreuth there had been present the German Emperor, the King of Bavaria, the Emperor Pedro of Brazil. Now the summer was over and Wagner was wearied to death. He wanted nothing but "to be free and play." He was drawn by the bubbling lightness of the Strauss dances. Next to him sat his life companion Cosima, the daughter of Liszt. Suddenly he flamed and took the baton from Anton Seidl's hand. He stood up in front of the musicians and conducted Strauss' *Wine, Woman and Song*. The supreme master of problems played the unproblematic music of release.\*

\*Conversely Strauss had long paid homage to Wagner—often against the wishes of his native city. When in 1861 Wagner wanted to bring his *Tristan* to Vienna, Hanslick had resisted in a fury, preaching the "impossibility of performing" the crazy work; thereupon Johann Strauss, the orchestra conductor, had had the almost incredible courage to

Twelve years later Brahms sat at the piano, exulting in the same rhythms. Again and again he wanted to transpose the *Sinfonietta Wein, Weib und Gesang* for the piano. But it was meant for orchestra. It grew out of the quartet, like everything good. It was a proof of Strauss' mastery of orchestration. Though Strauss has been called thoughtless and heedless, here he had shown a firm hand. The ponderous Brahms envied him for his lightness and one day he inscribed the fan belonging to Strauss' third wife Adele with the first bars of the *Blue Danube* waltz, adding "Unfortunately not by Brahms."

## JOSEF'S DEATH

*Mein Lebenslauf ist Lieb und Lust.* This touching waltz-title was evolved by Josef Strauss.\*



Some of the brothers' waltz titles were intellectual, materialistic, were jests and journalistic catchwords such as *Transaktionen*,

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venture on a first production of the *Tristan* music by the Strauss orchestra. In the middle of one of the garden concerts there suddenly resounded the ostracized tones. Consternation on the part of the listeners, then jubilation. Loudest of all were the pleased cries of Mother Strauss, then sixty years of age.

\*These are well-known strains. It was Josef's lot, after having been forgotten for half a century, to be revived by the sound-film. True, only his talent and not his name has recurred. Very few people, when singing the waltz with newly-prepared text, know who wrote it first . . . Soon after 1900 the operetta *Frühlingsluft* again became popular in Vienna and Germany. Its melodies were adapted from Josef Strauss. The name of the deceased composer was so well hidden that, for example, John Philip Sousa who heard the piece played in Vienna did not know as his memoirs reveal that it was by Josef Strauss. The Great War reduced Josef's descendants to direst poverty. Julius Bittner, the composer, reported in his journal *Der Merker* (1920) that Josef's daughter Lina, then a woman of sixty, had died from an illness caused by starvation.

which horrible to relate aroused in the dancers thoughts of the Stock Exchange and money. Vienna was the city of journalism, and publishers demanded original titles every time.

"The course of my life is love and joy." That title came from the pure heart of a very good husband, a very good father. And yet Josef's own life was that of an incessant worker, cigar-smoker, coffee-drinker. Long before, together with Eduard he had taken on himself the post that Johann had laid aside. With that post he took over many of the honors which would otherwise hardly have accrued to one so retiring. Thus he often traveled to Russia to take Johann's place, earned money and allowed himself to be fêted.

He felt very much at home in Pawlowsk. Russian melancholy appealed to him, even though he made good-natured fun of the "sighing, heartbreaking cello and the sentimentally plucked guitar" in his letters to his wife. These are full of affectionate longing for her and their small daughter. He expressed envy of his brother Johann who on his journey to Russia had had his loved one by his side and speaks of the "hard trial" to which he is subjected. "If I could but hold you in my arms and give you the assurance that my only longing is to live together with you in happiness and as your most faithful husband. I will not part from you again, and it is only the thought of you that makes me able to endure life here. Write and tell me what you do every day . . ."

The journey to Russia undertaken by Josef in 1870 was an unlucky one. It took him to Warsaw, to the Schweizertals, whose owner, one Anton Wlodkowski, maintained a concert-hall. Seven weeks before Josef's departure, Mother Anna Strauss had died, mourned by Vienna as if she had been a reigning princess. She had survived nearly two-thirds of the century and given three famous sons to the world. She had lived through the reigns of the Emperors Franz and Ferdinand and under Franz Josef. She always

kept modestly in the background, but she was very musical and full of energy. It was really due to her, handicapped though she was by the desertion of her husband, that he and their sons achieved the lasting fame their genius deserved.

Johann suffered greatly from her loss. He had a horror of death and a study of his music reveals that he never wrote a note that might be interpreted as a recognition of its existence. He did not even attend his mother's funeral. But he ceased to compose waltzes for the time being after her death.

Josef was not healthy. The father's nervous irritability had descended to him. In his student years it was no rare occurrence for him to faint. Conducting and wrangling with the members of the orchestra had increased his hyper-sensitivity. He had no such innate coolness and theatrical aplomb as stood his brother Eduard in such good stead in his dealings with the orchestra. Artistic opposition, disorder, inaccuracies could excite him to the point of illness.

On April 17th he took leave of the Viennese at a concert. His waltzes *Nilfluten* and *Frauenwürde* were played. The audience shouted farewells to him as he was sorrowfully packing up his music. Thoroughly fatigued he set out for Warsaw where he was informed that there had been a serious hitch in the arrangements. Seven of his men, including the most important members of the orchestra, had failed to arrive. Filled with anxiety he sent off telegrams to Eduard demanding substitutes. With their help he was able to start his concerts on the appointed day. Three concerts passed. The fourth proved fatal to him.

At the rehearsals the leading violinist, to Eduard's annoyance, had more than once failed to come in at the proper moment. In the end Josef told him to leave out the dangerous passage at the evening performance, to keep quite quiet and let the others play

the bars in question without him. The man disobeyed, but his colleagues, who had received no such orders, omitted the difficult passage and came in later. In spite of all his efforts Josef was unable to bring his disconcerted sound-troops into line again. With every second the wielders of the bows and blowers of the wind-instruments played themselves farther and farther apart. The conductor, overwhelmed by a feeling of sheer terror, collapsed in a faint at his desk, rolled across the platform and fell down four steps into the hall. With a wound at the back of his head and bleeding from nose and mouth he was carried home.

"Concussion of the brain," said the doctors. His anxious entourage at once telegraphed to his wife in Vienna. She rushed to Warsaw, together with his brother Johann. They found Josef fully conscious, but in great danger.

Meanwhile rumor had been busy spreading fantastic tales in all corners of Europe. Excitement was in the air. The Franco-German war was imminent. Any tale relating to the sword found ready credence. English, German and Austrian papers printed long columns with the news from Warsaw that Josef had been attacked by Russian officers and badly wounded because he had refused to play chauvinistic Russian music.

The story was of course untrue. But the Polish bourgeoisie was only too ready to believe that the government was responsible for the incident in the concert hall. The accidental duplication of events the same night helped to bring the false rumors to the very verge of truth.

The hall-porter of the Schweizertals, a quiet elderly man of the name of Stroutza, had observed that a few officers, accompanied by women of a questionable reputation, were attempting to enter the concert hall by the garden. They had no admittance tickets and tried to bargain with the porter. He refused to allow them to

enter, all the more as the concert had already begun. He warned the lieutenants to be quiet and threatened to call the police. In answer one of them drew his sword and hit Stroutza with it over the head so that he sank down covered with blood. Then all the young ruffians ran away.

The similarity of the names Stroutza and Strauss, the resemblance in their wounds, the immeasurable hatred of the public for the Russian garrison combined to produce the erroneous rumor through Europe. It was impossible to scotch it. It was particularly embarrassing for the Grand-Duke Constantine, a dilettante who on the occasion of earlier festivities had often played in the orchestra under Johann Strauss. Although by the wish of the Grand-Duke the Austrian Consul in Warsaw contradicted the story, it could not be silenced. Russia in general needed something to chew on. This provided it.

In the following weeks it seemed at first as if Josef would recover. He even signed a new contract with Wlodkowski by which the latter let his establishment to the brothers for the rest of the summer season. The contract is dated July 9th and was to terminate on September 21st. It is out of the question, however, that his brothers could have believed Josef would be able to appear again during that time. They merely wanted to secure the Schweizertals for their own orchestra. The lease was to be paid in four instalments, 3,000 roubles in all. While Karoline sat in despair by the bedside of her husband, placing ice-bags on his head and listening to his groans, Johann stood on the platform and conducted, fighting back his tears. But soon he was unable to keep it up. First they sent for Gustaf Carlberg, and later on for Philip Fahrback from Vienna, who, when the season was over was able to hand over to Johann excess takings amounting to nearly 14,000 gulden.

Johann gave the money to Josef's widow. Soon after July 9th,

Josef's condition had taken a turn for the worse. Thinking that Viennese doctors might perhaps be able to save her husband, Karoline Strauss brought him back to Vienna under terrible difficulties. The journey was very like Raimund's last. Thirty-five years earlier the dying poet with a pistol bullet in his brain had been brought to Vienna by his fiancée.

When Josef arrived three doctors sent for by his brother Eduard gave it as their united opinion that the bursting of a brain tumor, probably an old one, had caused his condition. On July 22nd Josef Strauss breathed his last. He was not even as old as his father had been when he died, he was only forty-three.

The next morning the doctors asked Karoline to allow them to perform a trepanation, in order that they might ascertain the locality and extension of a brain disease which might possibly explain Josef's fainting-fits in his early years. Karoline could not bring herself to give the permission; and so, beside the coffin, the rumors, which had hardly died down, raised their heads again: Josef had really died in Warsaw, the Russian government had paid the widow to keep silence and instead of Josef's body a wax doll had been brought to Vienna. A man called Wimmer in Vienna had this version printed, and it was only the evidence of the priest who had administered the last sacrament to Josef that killed the gossip in the city.

Josef was deeply mourned. He had been less well known in Vienna than Johann, who was exceedingly popular although he appeared so seldom, and than the busy Eduard, but there were nevertheless some critics who preferred him to his brothers. Among these quiet connoisseurs of music was Peter Cornelius, the composer of the *Barbier von Bagdad*. Of the four composers in the Strauss family, Josef had been the most profoundly contemplative and the one on whom Richard Wagner's harmonies had made the

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most lasting impression. It is a sign of the wide scope of his talent that it was he too who wrote the most daring polkas. He was never in Berlin; but bars like the following



were the real founders of the later "Berlin style."

Johann was greatly affected by the death of his brother. He and Josef had truly been *par nobile fratrum*. Their talents differed in kind and each profited without envy by the other's art. At times they had collaborated. The prickling *Pizzicato Polka*

*Più moderato*



bears the name of both Johann and Josef. Josef specialized in polkas, Johann in exuberant *tempi*. Concert-goers still delight in this combined specimen of their work.

Sometimes Eduard contributed too. *Trifolien* and a *Schützenquadrille* are by him and his brothers together. Eduard knew very well that in the case of lives so intimately intertwined and workshops so close together as those of the three brothers, the question of *meum* and *teum* could not always be solved with complete accuracy, and this should have made him much more careful in his utterances. It is due to Eduard's careless manner of speech that the world believes that Johann robbed Josef's estate in order that Josef's unfinished drafts might be incorporated with Johann's own work.

To have acted thus would not only have been incompatible with the fertility which almost overwhelmed Johann; it was above all incompatible with his innate nobility. Certainly it was strange that in Josef's desk, the contents of which Karoline had entrusted to



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Johann, no drafts were to be found at all. There was nothing there but published work. But that only proves that Josef for all his fecundity did not produce to excess. No drafts were found in Richard Wagner's desk when he died either. He had used up all his ideas for the construction of his operas, and none remained over.

These and similar stories created a slight coolness between Johann and Eduard. Their natures were very different too. The child-like Johann and Eduard the diplomat would never in any case have made an ideal team. After 1870, the burdens and the honors attached to the Strauss orchestra rested on Eduard alone. He carried them with their tradition till 1901.

# 9

## The World of the "Fledermaus"

*When Nietzsche one day observed to Wagner that in Figaro Mozart had invented the music of intrigue, Wagner replied, "On the contrary! In Figaro Mozart dissolved the intrigue in music . . ."*

DU MOULIN ECKART

### THE GREATNESS OF OFFENBACH

The man who by his example was able to change the objectives and the life of Johann Strauss at the age of forty was Jakob Offenbach, the Shaw of the era of Napoleon III. He was born in 1819 as the son of Juda Eberst, a cantor at the synagogue in Cologne. The last German pogrom took place during the first month of his life; in the summer of 1819, stones were thrown into the windows of all Jewish houses on the Rhine and in Southern Germany. This was the great maneuver instigated by the reactionaries to prevent the German people from claiming the rewards promised them as participants in the War of Independence. The pogrom was soon over.

Offenbach's childish ears were filled with German and Jewish popular songs. He imbibed sadness from both. When he looked out the windows he could see the Cologne carnival. Though he enjoyed the fun he sensed the gap that yawned between the mas-

querade and the ordinary everyday lives of the participants. The satirist in him was born then.

The boy wanted to become a musician. There was no conservatory in Cologne, so in 1833 Offenbach's father sent his fourteen-year-old boy to Paris. A possible inducement may have been that at that time two German Jews in Paris were approaching the zenith of their fame: Heinrich Heine and Meyerbeer. Cherubini and Jacques Fromental Halévy accepted the boy as a pupil. Soon however the modest sums he had been receiving from his father in Cologne ceased and he was forced to earn his living.

In the winter months of 1837, Johann Strauss the Elder had kindled Parisian enthusiasm for the waltz. Infected by this, young Offenbach produced his first waltzes. Their titles might have been given by Father Strauss himself: *Les Trois Graces*, *Les Amazones*, *Brunes et Blondes*. Later he worked as an assistant to Friedrich von Flotow, the opera composer. Finding that he was not earning enough to keep himself alive in Paris, he gave violoncello concerts in Cologne and London. Returning to Paris, he haunted the portals of the *Opéra Comique*; his ambition was to compose like Boieldieu, like Donizetti, to write something like *Fille du Régiment*. But the Gods of Paris opera stood firm against outsiders and Offenbach was unable to break in. He settled down quietly at a judicious distance from the comic opera which was not comic and the grand opera which was not grand and produced his delightful *Bouffes Parisiens*. He performed them with a miniature cast, acting as his own stage manager and at first as his own librettist. Soon he could count both the epicures and the common herd among his guests. The degeneration of the opera, expected by many, had suddenly become an accomplished fact; Offenbach brought relief and to this he owed his swift success.

The opera that Wagner attacked on the right flank was stormed by Offenbach on the left. Meyerbeer's grand opera seemed to him

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insincere through its mass effects, its glare, its exaggerated decoration and its noisiness, even though the noise was artistic. Wagner, while approving of gigantic resources and the coöperation of optical and musical effects welded together by language, did not make use of these factors in the same way as Meyerbeer. Nature represented in Wagner's grand opera had to be as unconfined as in reality. A thunderstorm in a Wagner opera, like one in the sky, was to determine its own tempo, the rush of the waters of the Rhine was to conform to its own laws.

In Wagner's eyes French opera and Offenbach's operetta were much the same thing. Conversely Offenbach found nonsense to parody both in Meyerbeer's grand opera and in Wagner's musical dramas. In the musical politics in which they were involved Wagner and Offenbach were violent partisans of opposing viewpoints.

Offenbach's creed was somewhat as follows: The opera has degenerated because it has grown away from the miniature form of the eighteenth century. The masters of the eighteenth century—Grétry, Lully, Gluck and Mozart—all wrote "little operas" (which is the true meaning of the word *operetta*) with clear orchestration. Soft, cool, full of irony without the incontinent mass of feelings and ideas introduced into the opera of the nineteenth century. From Spontini to Wagner there has been over-elaboration of all styles combined with preposterous length. It is presumptuous to present an audience awaiting a "little opera" with a work of art purporting to be universal and to show life in all dimensions. The artificial structures built by Meyerbeer and Wagner are not true to life.

Offenbach upheld the claims of the *genre primitif et gai* in opera. In this he was not unlike Rossini, whose operas were in any case the lightest of those in vogue at the Parisian opera. His librettists, however, often compelled Rossini to make his music more complicated than it should have been according to the limitations

of the gay and primitive style. Offenbach would have none of this. His first goal was the one act opera. It was to be melodious and light and as full of sweets as the *rue bonbonnières* of the previous century. The music was to satisfy, but not to satiate the hearers.

The mainstay of his little one-act operas is the French *couplet*, a song-form with uniform verses ending in a refrain that is taken up by everyone on the stage. The true *couplet* is ironical, humorous and brimful of topical allusions. Originally it was a genuine popular song, usually sung very quickly with dry humor devoid of sentimentality, and it was a form of art beloved of bourgeois, aristocracy and the masses alike. The fact that Offenbach's "little operas" included *couplets* such as were hummed unconcernedly in every street showed him to be very much the man of the nineteenth century. It prevented his delicate one-act operas from becoming too exclusive. Offenbach's little gems of miniature art did away with the *cavatina*, the *romanza* and the *aria* of grand opera, and the *couplets* which took their place endeared his work to the masses. From Parisian success with his "Bouffes," Offenbach rose to world success with what later became known as his characteristic work. His parodies of the antique *Orphée aux Enfers* (1858) and *La Belle Hélène* (1864) brought him to the summit with a rush. Their burlesque nonsense made people laugh, their pathos gripped the audience.

Heine in his best prose brought forth a similar amalgam of wit, sensuality, sorrow and death. These two masters produced a more widespread effect on the masses than any other who could be named.

Vienna was the next city to acclaim Offenbach. His choice of themes fell here on related soil. The parodistic form of the Offenbach operetta was a direct continuation of the theater of the old Viennese suburbs. In the make-up of the Viennese population there are two apparently unconnected elements. The one is senti-

mentality to the point of untruth; the local chauvinism that approves people and things merely because they are Viennese. The other is a spirit of malicious criticism directed against the objects, a kind of underground negation that may erupt in spurts of derision.

This strange vein of sarcasm is to be found in the greatest popular authors, from Abraham a Santa Clara, the baroque satirist of the seventeenth century, down to Nestroy, the foremost author of Viennese farces. It consists in the glaring juxtaposition of honor and shame, of dignity and cowardice, of marriage and death. Raimund is an example of the other species of Viennese, the self-loving and sentimental. There was nothing malicious about him and that is perhaps why he was less popular than Nestroy.

Nestroy, himself a parodist, introduced Offenbach to Vienna. After so much that was sweet and sickly the Viennese thoroughly enjoyed the laziness of his gods, the cowardice of his generals and feminine frailty of his goddesses.

It was the lightheartedness of the farces that appealed to them so strongly. They gave themselves up to laughter and appreciated the wit all the more because one could say to music what no one would have dared to say at meetings or in the newspapers. *La Grande Duchesse* and *La Barbe Bleue* would hardly have passed the imperial censorship if there had been no music. But with the music of the cancons, every problem took on a fluctuating character—even the question of gibes against royal family. Every one knew what was meant and nobody took offense. And so Offenbach's graceful art that transformed the impossible into the possible was felt to be essentially Viennese.

Walzel (whose pseudonym was F. Zell) and others put into appropriate "Viennese" the jests of Meilhac and Halévy, Offenbach's librettists. Hanswurst and Kasperl, those ancient figures of fun who, a hundred to two hundred years before, had pelted the

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gods and the great ones of the earth with popular jests seemed with Offenbach to have come into their own again. Every Viennese artist had to reckon with Offenbach's form of musical parody, now dubbed "operetta"—it had become the style of the period.

### STRAUSS AND THE THEATER

It was a difficult matter to induce Johann Strauss to attempt an operetta. But Madam Jetty had made up her mind that he should.

For a number of years she failed. Offenbach had been in Vienna, had spoken to Strauss at the "Concordia" festival and had said many flattering things to him. In his youth Offenbach had been an admirer of Strauss the Elder. Perhaps he meant what he said, perhaps it was mere superficial courtesy when he remarked to the son of Strauss, "You ought to write operettas."

Jetty could not forget those words. In Strauss they met nothing but resistance. He was cautious to the point of timidity and his consciousness of being a master of one of the "little arts" made him conservative. In an article on the Viennese opera written in 1863 Richard Wagner had testified to his art. "In respect of charm, fineness and true musical content one single Strauss waltz towers above most of the foreign factory products often so laboriously imported, as the *Stefansturm* towers over the kiosks of the Parisian boulevards!" When Wagner's hate of Offenbach is deducted from these words there remains a very honest opinion. It coincides with Strauss' own sentiments in which there was a proportion of conceit. As a banking house does not accept every commission, as a painter abides by his own style, so Strauss did not wish to be forced out of his own frame.

Possibly the saturated bourgeoisdom he had acquired with Jetty was now for the first time exacting its toll from him. But there was a profounder reason, known only to himself. Forced by circumstances, the epic poet Theodor Fontane had for a time been

a theatrical critic; when one day he caught sight of his initials Th.F. under a criticism, he remarked jokingly to a friend that he supposed they stood for *Theater-Fremdling* (stranger to the theater). Strauss had a still greater right to this designation. He was one of the rare people—they are particularly rare in Vienna—who know nothing about the theater, whose inmost nature has remained alien to the stage.

Strauss had a far more lyrical nature than his father, was not, like him, subject to tempestuous outbreaks. The infinite waltz that swings back upon itself was his domain. When Hanslick, notwithstanding his great respect, later wrote against Strauss operettas and in favor of Offenbach's, he did so because he was a critic who really understood more about the dramatic in music than Strauss. Hanslick thought—and thought rightly—that the waltz delayed action. If the essential element on the stage is progressive action, as the Greek origin of the word drama indicates, then a work of dramatic art must stride forward. Rotation only retards it.

Strauss had an instinctive feeling that he did not belong to the stage. In addition he was a stranger to the value of words. We have already seen this in the case of the *Blue Danube* waltz, when the words almost caused the music to sink below water level. Composers of operas and operettas were dependent on the librettists. That Wagner and Albert Lortzing could ride two horses at once—write the music to their texts and the texts to their music—was an incomprehensible miracle.

It was therefore with the discomfort of a lyricist that Strauss looked on the demands of his wife, of publishers and managers. They seemed to think it was all so easy. Was he not the man to whom, as to Schubert, ideas came in a continuous stream? As if Schubert had not failed when it came to writing for the stage! And after him the great Robert Schumann. The more song a man had within him, the more he should avoid the stage. But on the



other hand Strauss felt a desire to hear a human voice float along on his melodies. Song-waltzes brought musical expression from the feet up into the heart and throat. He was tempted by the desire to hear his music sung for a whole evening. Could it be done?

His thoughts turned to Suppé. That astonishing man was six years older than Strauss, the same age as Offenbach. Of Italian nationality—though an Austrian citizen, Suppé at first could not speak a single word of German. From Dalmatia, where he was born, he traveled to Italy and studied law in Padua. At the Scala in Milan he heard the operas of Bellini, Rossini and Donizetti. He learnt to play the flute and to write requiems.

Donizetti was his uncle, a native of Bergamo in northern Italy. Bergamo lies in a melancholy alpine valley devoid of the sunny brightness usually associated with Italy. Of all Italians, Donizetti is perhaps the only one who could have written *Lucia di Lammermoor*, in which so much knowledge of madness and of northern loneliness is to be found side by side with southern colorings. The nephew of this tragic master of opera was Franz von Suppé. Tragic because the same facility with which the great Rossini turned into sound everything he touched ruined Donizetti's nerves. He literally composed himself to death. His whole life became an opera from his rising in the morning, through dressing, lunching, taking a walk, dining and going to bed, his musical inspirations fastened like harpies on his brain and tore away his life. Donizetti wrote seventy operas within a very short period and died in madness.

Some of the fertility though not of the insatiability of the maestro Donizetti was left over for young Suppé. His father died and he moved with his mother from Milan to Vienna. Then he learnt German. Vienna in pre-revolutionary, in Metternich times, with its little one-storeyed houses and the beautiful palaces for its aristocracy was much more Italian in character than it is today. But

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Suppé re-discovered most of his Italy in the theater. The concentrated light, the flies, rouge painted curtain, the exaggerated speech and extravagant gestures of the theater are everywhere a message from the south.

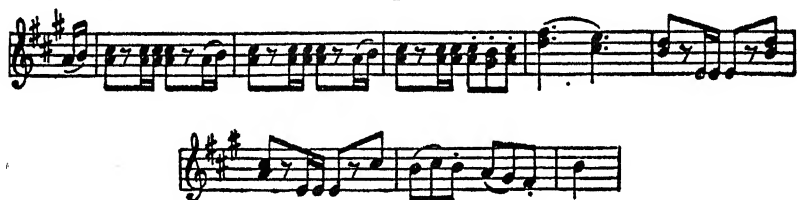
Suppé became orchestral conductor in a theater. Rapidly he arranged the music of theatrical performances, concentrating on effects that would draw the public. Making a detour by way of the theater he became a true Viennese. For the Viennese proper is a theater-goer, a being that lives in the theater, and the only other of his kind is the Italian. For all other German-speaking peoples the theater is a plane which is sharply divided from the rest of life; but in Vienna the theater has the Italian quality of being able to penetrate into all the outer spaces of the people.

Offenbach's enormous successes, reported in every newspaper in the fifties, drew the attention, not only of Nestroy and Binder, the orchestra conductor of the Carl Theatre, but also of Suppé. He encouraged his own director, the manager of the Theatre an der Wien, Pokorny, to travel to Paris, see the Offenbach works for himself and buy the best of them for Vienna. But the journey was not undertaken. The management was at the point of collapse, and the staff began to break up. A little later Offenbach was introduced into the Carl Theatre. *Le Mariage aux Lanternes*, *La Violonnette*, *Les Savoyards* and other one-act buffooneries began to enchant the public. Then Suppé took a sudden decision to attempt something similar, though he had not Offenbach's gift of irony. His musical forerunners were Rossini and Donizetti, whose medium was the *aria*, not the *couplet*. Suppé's light melodies lack French tightwaistedness and Offenbach's pithiness—they are rather wide-bloused in the manner of the Italian uniform.

He made his début in 1860 with a little operetta, *Pensionat*. Copying Offenbach and *La Belle Hélène* he wrote *Schöne Gala-*

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*thee*, a travesty of the Greek. Shortly before, a farce had been played in Paris called *Filles de Marbre*, a most improper play; it was the tale of a Pygmalion whose marble girls came to life. Leopold von Kohlenegg, an Austrian officer who had resigned his commission in 1859, pounced on this material for Franz von Suppé. His Galathee had certain Offenbach lights; but the music that Suppé wrote to it was merely gay without the irony the subject required. Suppé the Italian in his good moments had inspirations which an opera god like Rossini would not have despised. Thus for example when in his *Leichte Kavallerie* the dashing overture passes into the bewitching gallop;



but this taste was uncertain and in the typical way of conductors he was subject to many influences, he made mistakes in both directions and grew boring and humdrum in the German manner. In spite of European successes—his first and greatest was *Fatinitza*—he often erred in his musical style. Most strangely perhaps in his *Boccaccio* which he wrote as a man of sixty. The theme dealt with the most vicious period of Florentine life in the fifteenth century, and should have been composed as an operetta, as a joyous, lively brio all Italian. Instead, Franz von Suppé patchily incorporated motives from German Lortzing opera:

If only you love me  
You need not be true.

Though he met with success at first, the public finally became aware of the heterogeneity of his styles. Art that is to endure for a long time must not have rifts and seams. And so Suppé's oper-

ettas disappeared in the second generation. But round about 1870, Suppé was still the living proof that the Viennese public wished to see operettas that were not by Offenbach. It was just about 1870 too that the Offenbach period was beginning to decline. This was due less to Suppé and his talent which measured by Offenbach, were of small value, than to the political constellation. The greatest works of art are independent of political currents; the lesser ones swim with the feelings of the day and are themselves part of its history. This may be observed over and over again; even the operetta, or perhaps the operetta most of all was dependent on current events.

The victories of the Prusso-German armies over France had powerful repercussions in Vienna. Not of pure sympathy. No good Austrian would really have welcomed the predominance of Berlin in Germany and Europe, but on the other hand Austrians would have been glad to see Napoleon and his Frenchmen lose some of their world prestige. The change of sentiment, for a time at least was expressed partly in the attitude of Viennese art. For the first time Offenbach's operettas began to waver in the repertory. Through the breach made by Suppé, Strauss might be able to enter the house.

But he was still disinclined to do so. Without his knowledge, notices and hints were inserted in the papers to the effect that some years before he had already completed a comic opera called *Don Quixote* but had locked it away in his desk. But when that did not help either, Jetty Strauss secretly took some of her husband's compositions out of his desk and brought them to Maximilian Steiner, the director of the Theatre an der Wien in order that he might have libretti written for them. Suddenly there came to Strauss a few singers who surprised him singing his melodies to a set of words of which he was completely ignorant. Finally he capitulated and began to write.

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### THE FIRST STAGE WORKS

In 1869 Maximilian Steiner, born in Hungary, took over the Theatre an der Wien. At first he shared the management with Marie Geistinger, that excellent soubrette. Steiner was a man of the theater with widely varied taste: it ranged from Offenbach to Anzengruber, the new popular dramatist. It was his energy that wrested from the hesitating Strauss his first operetta. This was *Die Lustigen Weiber von Wien*. The text had been written by Josef Braun who had proved himself as Suppé's librettist. Strauss composed quickly. But when the work was finished he obstinately insisted that Josefine Gallmeyer—at the time soubrette at the Carl Theater—was to play the leading part. But that could not be done. As the *Lustige Weiber* belonged by contract to the Theatre an der Wien while the theater was not in a position to cast the principal role, Strauss simply withdrew his work.

Strauss was a famous man. That a work by him could disappear unperformed on account of a singer seems strange; but it was consistent with that period in which, perhaps for the first time, the unconditional public homage paid to women by Parisians had begun to infect Vienna. The Offenbach Theatre in particular was a theater of beautiful women. Rossini and, in fact, the whole of Italy demanded nothing but beautiful voices. And Vienna, so like the Italian world in artistic matters, had done the like. But Paris desired the woman over and above what she could do. "My dear friend," Offenbach wrote to the editor of a journal who had wished to force a female singer on him by his recommendation, "your young and beautiful singer seems to me neither beautiful nor young. Do hurry up and find me someone, but put on your spectacles. You know that with my small stage the public sits very close to the artists and in consequence the women who sing in my theater must be more beautiful than elsewhere . . ." In the

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sixties the Parisian theaters really were the "racing stables of the habitués" where the most conspicuous and the most expensive woman was necessarily and consistently also the greatest artist. The famous Hortense Schneider, who died at the age of ninety in 1920, was the first to create (in 1855) the type of the great diva to whom the princes of Europe did homage; who brought her theatrical managers, librettists and composers to the verge of despair; who was the center of town newspaper gossip which she fed daily with new morsels. Hortense Schneider was fair and had blue eyes; she was an Alsatian in the black-eyed capital of France. In Vienna it was Gallmeyer who, like Schneider, did her best to compel the town to sit at her feet. She was successful, although even she had enemies who thought her vulgar in Offenbach roles and who dubbed her "a local singer of coarsest quality." In general her acting aroused enthusiasm—it was a puckish mixture of grace, humor and flippancy. As the little glove-maker in the Viennese performances of Offenbach's *Vie Parisienne* she is said to have greatly surpassed the actress who took the part in Paris. Strauss had written his work for her. When Gallmeyer parted from it, Strauss parted from his work.

Undismayed Steiner submitted a new libretto to the master. *Indigo Oder die Vierzig Räuber*. For years after Vienna discussed the problem whether these forty robbers had in reality been forty librettists. So dislocated and distracted was the action, so roughly and heterogeneously had the material been hammered together. As Steiner himself could not say who all the people were who had collaborated in its manufacture, he modestly wrote on the program "After an older story arranged for the stage by Max Steiner." Hanslick's description of the book was that it handed over to the composer poorly-stuffed dolls without aim, object or sense. The only sentiment they expressed was nonsense, the only humor lay in the Viennese dialect. This oily, vulgar libretto would be sure to

do the operetta serious harm. A man of Johann Strauss' talent should not have put his hand to it. Fantaska spoke at times like the Queen of the Amazons, at others like a washerwoman; King Indigo and his high priest were merely inane copies of Offenbach's King Bobèche and Kalchas. "And if at least the thing had been played through quickly! But this operetta lasts for four hours. The whole third act consists of stopgaps that have nothing to do with the action and put an immense strain on the patience of the audience. In writing his music the composer seems to have divined the inevitable dissatisfaction of the public; towards the end he quickly produces all the graceful dance motives of the opera, *pièces justificatives* for this objectionable result . . ."

In spite of this scathing criticism Strauss accomplished the impossible. Through his very beautiful music he rescued the operetta from the bog of the libretto. *Indigo* grew into a great success. Hanslick's report that the public had become embarrassed and fatigued is not in accordance with the facts. The people who had demonstrated their enormous expectation by besieging the house and its box offices for many days before the opening were far too keyed up to feel disappointed. "Business in seats for the first performance," reports the critic Ludwig Speidel, "was exceedingly brisk; the management was obliged to divide the large stranger's box into two private boxes. The auditorium that evening was a very peculiar spectacle. The authors and journalists of Vienna, the most eminent composers and musicians, the unemployed artists of all the theaters were present; and the director of the Court Opera, conductor Herbeck, who had not been able to find a seat in the audience, watched the performance from an improvised seat in the orchestra . . ." Thus failure was impossible. The Theatre an der Wien was not only a great Revue theater, it was also the stage of classical memories. It had been Schikaneder's arena, the theatrical director and the librettist of Mozart's immortal *Zauberflöte*.

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From its stage Beethoven's *Fidelio* had first been given to the world in November, 1805. When added to this the Director of the Court Opera seated himself expectantly in the orchestra because he could not find a seat, it must be conceded that Strauss had collected the most illustrious audience possible.

He had spent the day before the performance in extreme excitement. In the morning he was driving with a friend to the inner city when he caught sight of the large placard from which the word *Indigo* stared at him like a threat. He fell back fainting, so convinced was he in his inmost heart that he had allowed himself to be persuaded into something in which he could not possibly succeed. But by the evening he was transformed. "Just as of old in the dance halls he swung himself boldly up to his desk; one flaming glance darted to the right, a second flaming glance to the left and then the signal to begin. And when the brilliant principal number of the evening resounded, the waltz '*ja, so singt man in der Stadt, wo ich geboren,*' the whole house broke out into cries of jubilation, the occupants of the boxes and orchestra stalls began to sway in dance time. Then it seemed as if Strauss must snatch away his violin from the nearest player, draw his bow across it and as he had been wont to do at the Sperl, the Zeisig or at Dom-mayer's begin to play for the people to dance."

This was Speidel's report. In actual fact a very curious psychological phenomenon was observable. The public seemed to be on the watch. It was on the watch for "its Strauss." In this fact alone Strauss might have foreseen his destiny. When the overture began, the whole mass of the audience was interested but somewhat disconcerted. This drumming of demi-semi-quavers as in Rossini's *Semiramis* or Weber's *Abu Hassan* might be beautiful but it was not their very own Strauss. The *andante moderato*, characteristically oriental, the surging thirds in E minor in an unfamiliar rhythm were admirable no doubt, but they left the people cold.



When soon afterwards the Viennese emerged, when suddenly the characteristic feature of Strauss music broke out—two semi-quavers in the second half of the bar—then the public began to smile. *Indigo*, thank heaven, was by Strauss. Not till then did the public “forgive” the range of the composition which reached from the immediate vicinity to the romantic orient. When *Fantaska*, sung by Marie Geistinger, began her G minor ballad “*geschmiedet fest an starrer Felswand*,” the bridge from public to opera had been built. But in the days that followed it became apparent that the public wanted the music but neither the play nor the performance. A number of librettists had played about with the material before the first night. Now, when everybody was expressing indignation at the words, still more pens were applied to the misbegotten subject. With new words and a different title, the Strauss operetta was played in Naples and in London, in Paris and Berlin—an unmistakable sign that the music was effective in and by itself.

Had Strauss really succeeded in replacing Offenbach in Vienna? The *Leipziger Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, hostile to Offenbach, bore witness to this in a very insulting manner in the course of an unfavorable criticism of *La Princesse de Trebizonde*. “Vienna, by the way, should soon be able to prepare such beggarly soups and messes for itself. It is not long since Mr. J. Strauss, the famous manufacturer of waltzes, perfected a whole opera according to this recipe called *Indigo und die Vierzig Rauber*, a true waltz-opera which has already seen its first quarter of a hundred performances.”

Some of this was justified, as *Indigo* really included some melodic decorations in Offenbach style, some orchestral extravagances which were however soon discarded. Strauss had to be himself and he was not a scoffer like Offenbach. Nor could he have won through a real duel with Offenbach’s greatness. So it was favorable to Strauss’ first attempts at operettas that Offenbach was silent. Politics had driven him from the stage. The French unjustly accused him of

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being the cause of the German victory. His music, it was said everywhere, had slackened discipline in France, and "opened for Bismarck the way to Paris." The Germans, no more knightly, hated the former citizen of Cologne because he had become a Frenchman. So Offenbach was between two stools, and even in Vienna which had hitherto been loyal to him, he left the field to Johann Strauss.

In his second operatic work there is no trace of Offenbach's influence. This was called *Karneval in Rom*.

Strauss, who understood nothing of language, loved colors. Geistinger, when Strauss played *Indigo* to her for the first time, had the feeling of a "color-piano"; like a prism held against the light, "the whole thing began to sparkle . . . Fire streamed out of it . . ." For Strauss, all sensuality, colors were related to tones.

The element in the libretto of *Karneval* (by Josef Braun) that possibly attracted Strauss was the fact that the hero was a painter. That shows how little he knew. A painter on the stage is perhaps the most undramatic of all figures. His activities are pursued on a canvas that one cannot see, or at best that is too small to bear witness to his talent. Gottfried Keller would certainly not have made a drama of his great painter novel *Der Grune Heinrich*. That there is a painter in *Bohème* is no proof to the contrary; Puccini, who knew all about situations, only allowed his painter Marcel to paint because Marcel was to throw his picture and his colors into the stove to warm his cold attic.

But from Braun's libretto, undramatic from the beginning on account of his hero, there emanated an epico-lyrical charm. As the son of his father, Johann Strauss was heir and successor to romanticism. *Karneval* contained a romantic theme, a favorite with Goethe: the journey through Italy of a student of art. The painter Arthur Bryk travels to the south, makes the acquaintance of a girl in a Swiss village, falls in love with her, paints her and promises

to marry her. Then he journeys to Rome, forgets Marie and is caught up in the colorful whirl of an Italian love which is unworthy of his heart. Marie, who disguised as a Savoyard boy had followed him to the Eternal City, offers him her services as an apprentice. Arthur Bryk does not recognize her but accepts her offer. As the youth Beppino, she rescues him from the love snares of the Countess Falconi; she convinces Bryk himself and the Count of the faithlessness of the Countess. Then a pretty duet, followed by a stolen kiss. Beppino reminds the painter that all his loves up to date have deceived him. She paints on the canvas the heads of all his frivolous women. The last head, however, that she shows to her master is the portrait of the only one who has been true to him—the portrait of Marie. Thereupon he recognizes the Savoyard and extends his hand—astonished and touched.

This action, though not dramatic, did not lack tension; it was very colorful, and the musician was able to reproduce the hues in his transcription. None of the operettas has so many true song-roots as the *Karneval in Rom*. There was a trace of Goethe in the material. Marie's relationship to her master was the love of Mignon for Wilhelm Meister. It was a very well-known motif and called for a particular form of sentiment—the sentiment of the unrecognized woman serving her master. But at the end the woman was gloriously triumphant: at the Roman carnival, Marie appears on Arthur's arm as his bride-elect.

It was not really an operetta at all. In this Strauss was reaching out to the lyrical opera, the song-opera, which fed by Schumann, had hitherto attained its highest point with Charles Gounod and Ambroise Thomas.

All the coloring of romanticism, used up in literature, questionable in painting at that period, appeared in a glamorous procession for that one evening of opera: Switzerland, the ruins of ancient

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Rome, the studio festival, the carnival. Herbeck at the time intended to take over the *Karneval* as a lyrical opera into the Court Opera-House. He would perhaps have done so, if death had not prevented him. Possibly such an important event as the designation of one of his works as an opera would have changed the course of Johann Strauss' life and work. For the time being the public had an affection for *Karneval* as an operetta, although it was actually no such thing. Strauss' infallible perception in things musical made him somewhat dissatisfied with his second dramatic opus. So for a third time he set to work, this time in quite a different direction. And then he achieved the great throw of his life, the *Fledermaus*.

### THE LUCKY CHOICE OF A LIBRETTO

What is a *réveillon*? Everybody knows what a *réveiller* is. It is the military signal to awake. According to the usage of the French language then, *le réveillon* ought to be a superlative form of awakening. These things passed through the mind of Director Steiner when he heard for the first time that a play of this name, written by Meilhac and Halévy, had created a furore in Paris. He bought the piece at once. But when he had read it, he was under the distinct impression that the Theatre an der Wien would not be able to do anything with it. The basic idea seemed impossible. What did *réveillon* really mean?

There existed very few Viennese who could explain the word. A few of these, strangely enough, were members of the Strauss orchestra. Thirty-six years before, on the occasion of that now almost mythical journey to the France of Louis Philippe, the members of the orchestra had experienced a *réveillon* in Rouen. It was that Christmas riot combined with a masked ball of which they had later told horrified tales. Instead of a green Christmas tree and

the hallowed Christmas hymns, the French had instituted a blasphemous masked ball, at which "a Capuchin monk had even rotated in the waltz with a nun."

A masked ball on Christmas Eve? That was too much even for the Viennese. That was Max Steiner's opinion—and Franz Jauner too, to whom Steiner tried to sell the play, like a broker on the Stock Exchange, shook his head and turned away. So Steiner was left with goods on his hands that he could not place. Thereupon the music publisher Lewy, a personal friend of Johann Strauss, advised him to make of it a libretto for Strauss. Steiner adopted the idea and sent for the librettists Richard Genée and Karl Haffner. In the very first quarter of an hour the two experienced authors realized that the "Supper on Christmas Eve" could not take place on Christmas Eve but on any one of 364 more suitable days. This deprived the Parisian play of its insult to sentiment, destroyed the disturbing dissonance: the libretto of the *Fledermaus* was saved.

Gustav Lewy's desire to play this book of words into the hands of Strauss—arose out of an association of ideas. The French play was by Meilhac and Halévy, the successful librettists of Offenbach's operas. Halévy was of German-Jewish extraction, a nephew of the great composer of *La Juive*; he and Meilhac, the typical Parisian, supplemented each other excellently and together they supplemented Offenbach. But they had written their *Réveillon* for the "speaking" stage. Had they submitted the book to the great composer for consideration? Was Offenbach perhaps played out? Gustav Lewy became excited by the idea that here perhaps Strauss might create something which had originally belonged to Offenbach? Or had Offenbach refused it? That of course was possible too.

The piece was strange. On the one hand it was a comedy of manners, ridiculing the self-indulgent customs of the Parisian upper

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classes a year after France had been defeated; on the other it was honestly non-intellectual. Comedy based on confusion of personalities in the Romance style. It included a scene that had been well known for centuries from the adultery farces of the harlequin tradition: Somebody is arrested because he is taken for somebody else. The wife's lover, for instance, is mistaken for her husband. Thus in Meilhac and Halévy's play, M. Gaillardin is to go to prison for a week in expiation of some trifling offense. Instead of doing so, he resorts—in the character of the Marquis de Valangoujar—to the fête given by an exotic prince. Madame Gaillardin meanwhile receives her former adorer Alfred, an orchestra conductor. So that when the men come to arrest Gaillardin, Alfred, in order not to compromise the lady of his heart, is obliged to pretend to be Gaillardin and wend his way to prison.

This moderately burlesque confusion of personalities (whether it took place on Christmas eve or at some other time), this "lover in difficulties," could hardly make the Parisians' hearts beat faster with excitement. The second and third acts, showing the fête at the house of the Prince and later the dénouement in the prison when Monsieur Gaillardin appears to give himself up and finds Alfred in his place, are not sufficient either to explain the immense success which the play had in the Palais Royal in 1872. There was something indefinable that hovered over these events, an aroma of mockery concerned with the doings of the frivolous strata of French society. To this was added the charm of a performance whose exuberant realism had never till then been equalled. Not only had intoxication never been so realistically portrayed; the actors—and this had till then been rigorously forbidden by the rules of decency—even turned their backs demonstratively on the public and consumed real, steaming food.

The reasons for the Parisian success were bound up with the locality. With a situation, partly artistic, partly political. On Vien-

nese soil these things would not attract. Genée and Haffner might easily fail with their German version. That their great throw was successful was due to the fact that they were not casual librettists, but real artists.

Haffner, who died in Vienna in the greatest poverty a few years after the world-success of the *Fledermaus*, was a dependent of the Carl Theater. Every month, for a pittance, he delivered to the theater a farce or a sentimental play. He knew his handicraft and what pleased the public;—his technique was infallible. He was almost seventy when he set to work on the *Fledermaus*. A strange destiny had transplanted him from the Prussian town of Königsberg to light-hearted Vienna for which he was obliged to write plays. Haffner was only able to be melancholy within his own four walls; the fogs of the north had never quite departed from him.

Quite different was Richard Genée. He was fifty, twenty years younger than Haffner. He had traveled widely; in 1848 he had been orchestra conductor in Reval, since 1868 director at the Prague State Theatre. His invaluable quality was that he was not only an author, but a musician as well. That was how he knew the troubles connected with operas, knew how much could be destroyed by an unsuitable libretto. He himself composed romantic operas, for example the *Geiger aus Tirol*, for which he wrote his own words, and a number of operettas, none of which has survived. But his libretti had the professional touch and Strauss was not soon to find anything as good. Most of the librettists whose work he favored were journalists, but hardly literary writers. And though Hugo Wittmann and Viktor Léon had the latter quality, they were not musicians.

Genée, whose gift of perception enabled him to figure in advance what Strauss' music might do for the material, carried Haffner with him. Out of Meilhac-Halévy, they extracted the following three act play. It was a happy idea for a libretto:

Gabriel von Eisenstein, a financier, has to go to prison. The former lover of his wife Rosalinde appears—Alfred, the tenor. Too weak to turn him away from her door, she tells him he may return when her husband has disappeared. But Eisenstein has not the slightest intention of beginning his prison sentence that same day, for on that day a masked ball is to take place at the palace of the Russian Prince Orlofsky. There he must have a last fling. Alfred is sitting with Rosalinde when the door opens and the governor of the prison—Frank—enters to fetch Eisenstein. Tableau! The surprised lover, not wishing to compromise Madame Eisenstein, departs to prison in the character of the husband.

Gabriel von Eisenstein, however, has a "false friend," Falke the notary. This lawyer, Eisenstein's secret companion in orgies and adventures, had once been taken away from a ball by his friend in a state of intoxication; to the amusement of the general public he had been laid out on the grass wearing the costume of a bat. To go to a ball disguised as a bat used to be no uncommon thing. The practice is said to have been introduced in Berlin by a French emigrant who appeared at a Court fête in 1799 masked and got up as a bat. Falke seizes his opportunity of revenge and tells Eisenstein's wife that her husband is not in prison, but at the Orlofsky ball. He induced her to go there too and surprise Eisenstein *in flagranti*.

Falke is playing a double game. He acts as *maitre de plaisir* to the eccentric nobleman Prince Orlofsky and lets the Russian into the secret: the meeting between Eisenstein and his wife is to be served up to him as entertainment. Rosalinde goes to the ball. Unrecognized, in a black semi-domino, she bewitches her own husband. She entices his watch from him by her flattery, and then disappears. He is obliged to leave without learning who she is.

But at this ball her husband was not the only person Rosalinde found. She made a discovery which pleased her still less. Adele,



her own maid, was present, enjoying herself at Orlofsky's festivities and wearing her mistress' clothes.

Johann Strauss immediately realized the great potentialities of the libretto for him. Here was a story in which the central point of the action was a ball. The first act led up to it and the third act unravelled its knotted threads. This was very important. Strauss was not impervious to Hanslick's rejection of the "dance-and-waltz-operetta," but on the other hand his Viennese public demanded waltz-rhythms from him always, even on the stage. These difficulties resolved themselves when as in the *Fledermaus* action was focused on a *fête*. Dance rhythms then became an integral factor of the dramatic purpose.

Moreover, there was great charm in the situations presented in the story of the *Fledermaus*. So strong was this quality that, except in the *Zigeunerbaron*, Strauss never came across its equal again. The characters arise almost spontaneously out of their situations. Superficial as the characters in *Fledermaus* may appear from an ethical standpoint, from the aesthetic-psychological point of view they are light but not empty. All have two aspects. Rosalinde is prepared to deceive her husband, but she loves him nevertheless. Adele is charming and vulgar. Eisenstein deceives his wife and yet he is completely captivated by her in the disguise scene. The wide scope afforded by these contrasts was bound to tempt a composer. Moreover, as we learnt in the case of the Bastille when the primitive urges of the populace led them to dance on its ruins, the conceptions of prison and the dance, antithetic as they are, have some hidden affinity and exercise great attraction. Adele, the serving maid, and her love-affairs opened up further possibilities, ancient and repetitive as this theme was.

Decidedly the libretto was a fortunate choice. Without, like Mozart's *Figaro*, irradiating in passing the problem of an epoch; without being the equal of the *Rosenkavalier* in carefully disposed

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coloring, *Fledermaus* yet has the truly great potency of musical comedy, of what is known as "comic opera."

Strauss was carried away by it. When he had read it, he threw himself on the book in a frenzy. In contact with the book his whole body turned to music. He could hardly be made to eat and drink; he shut himself up in his Hietzing villa, barricaded the lonely house against everyone except Jetty—and in forty-three nights the whole of the music was shed flaming on to paper.

It was a trance such as he had never experienced. A psycho-physical eruption which shattered him to the point of shedding tears of happiness and brought him to the brink of mania.

### BLACK FRIDAY

Certain portents in the air should however have warned Strauss not to touch the book.

It was flippant as hardly any book had been since *Figaro*. After its first performance in 1796 a native of Berlin gave the following description of Mozart's opera: "I listened to a song-play that offends morals, insults understanding and treads virtue underfoot. Is it possible to remain indifferent when for three solid hours one is obliged to look on at actions, each single one of which would suffice to arouse just wrath?"

The Viennese are anything but prudes and it seemed exceedingly unlikely that they would write anything of the kind about *Fledermaus*. Nor did they. But circumstances had suddenly made them touchy and they stayed away from a play that depicted the extravagances of good society in the fifties and sixties. They had lost the means of leading such lives themselves. Devoted as Vienna was to Strauss, first-rate of its kind as the play was, it only ran for sixteen performances.

The reason for this change of atmosphere was financial.

On May 1, 1873, the great world exhibition had been opened by

the Emperor. Seven years after a lost war the Austrian State advertised its prosperity. France was enfeebled, she had lost her last war against Bismarck and had just been obliged to expend her life's blood in paying five billion francs compensation to the Germans. In 1866, Bismarck with political moderation had refrained from ruining Austria financially. He had only weakened her morally. Since the exclusion of the Paris Bourse, Vienna had taken over the leadership of the continental stock exchanges. Vienna, not Berlin. In spite of the billions from Paris, capitalists in Berlin had been more cautious than the Viennese.

Emperor Franz Josef had long been considered the emperor of the rich bourgeoisie, the patron of industry and banking. As soon as the first news of the Viennese exhibition reached other countries, international promoters of ambitious projects made haste to reach Vienna. The same people who two years before had been driven out of France by the collapse of the Second Empire, erroneously believed that in Vienna they had found the spot in Europe where a gigantic economic development, a kind of American miracle would set in. They had been told that the number of houses in Vienna was to be doubled or even tripled because, owing to the establishment of new factories, an immense influx of population was expected. It was Austrian optimism that led foreigners to believe this, and again it was the confidence shown by foreigners—though they only speculated and avoided paying real money—that encouraged domestic optimism. Each therefore drove the other on.

In reality the whole was a false boom. The most important branches of production, the extraction of coal and iron, were neglected and industrial progress was weak. The citizens' savings were not invested in industrial concerns, but in public establishments which like opalescent soap-bubbles enveloped industry in their inflated skins. One hundred and seventy-five new banks had

## THE WORLD OF THE "FLEDERMAUS"

been founded and more than a thousand joint-stock companies floated. But there was hardly a single case in which the capital had been paid up.

An article in the *Neue Borsenzeitung* of 1873 describes the profiteering methods by which the pennies of the duped and unsuspecting public were induced to flow into enterprises which were no true enterprises at all. "If somewhere in a lonely valley there stands a deserted chimney, this immediately becomes an engineering works; where the semi-paralyzed arms of a debilitated wind-mill are seen to rotate, at once a mills concern is put on the market; someone stumbles over a boat lying on a river bank and proceeds to found an inland Lloyd whose steamships dart hither and thither. The founder's imagination transforms the carpenter sawing planks into a business supplying building materials and makes a chemical factory of an enterprising boy who lets off a rocket . . ."

As late as in March, 1873, nobody suspected anything. Stock exchange transactions showed prices that had never been reached before. On the 26th of April came the first slump movement, from which however there was a recovery. The speeches made at the opening of the world exhibition lent firmness to the Stock Exchange, but only for a week. On May 7th a flight from shares set in, on May 8th a hundred firms were hammered. Then came May 9th, the Black Friday of horror. On the Stock Exchange the speculators exchanged blows. Vienna heard shots, not from the military to which the Stock Exchange had appealed, but from suicides. Most of the shares dropped by almost a hundred per cent. The paper wealth of the Stock Exchange magnates had been dissipated as if a tornado had passed over it.

The panic on the Viennese Stock Exchange spread to the rest of Europe. The first countries to be affected were Germany, Italy, Switzerland. Then the wave came which had its inception in

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Vienna broke over the financial markets of England, the Scandinavian countries and Russia. The ripples from the great crash flowed as far as South America and then ebbed everywhere.

In Vienna this black May, 1873, brought to birth a vehement hatred of the speculators, a muddy flood-tide of lowest instincts. The new anti-semitism overlooked the fact that there had been Jews, not only among the guilty but also among the sufferers. Political leadership slipped out of the hands of liberalism and now for ever into the union of the petite bourgeoisie with the conservatives, the union which from then on was to characterize the epoch of Franz Josef.

Among the musicians who immediately proceeded to swim with the stream was old Father Fahrbach, Father Strauss' tried collaborator. His son Anton Fahrbach had composed a crash polka for piano and voice which gave drastic expression to the sentiments of the petite bourgeoisie in Vienna against the speculators. It was said that Anton Fahrbach had intended the song only for a small group of people, as a jest for his friends, but Father Phillip made the mistake of playing the crash polka with his orchestra before a hall full of people, and they all joined in singing the anti-semitic refrain.

This was the atmosphere in which the music of the *Fledermaus* was born; it was removed from the stage almost at once and kept as it were under glass. When it resounded for the first time the Viennese public was unable to understand such blissfully intoxicated music.

Strauss should have remembered that champagne-songs could hardly arouse such pleasurable sentiment in those who at the moment had hardly enough money to buy themselves a bottle of the ordinary *vin du pays*. Of what interest to those who had become poor in a night could be the joyous outpourings of all those

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grisettes, idlers and revellers on the stage? What a wonderful thing it is that Strauss took none of this into consideration. It is impossible that he should have been ignorant of it. The most retiring artist, if he has anything of greatness, is a contemporary. Strauss, drunk on music, never troubled about daily matters; but through the rifts and joints of his Hietzing Tusculum penetrated the delicate aroma of all things that concerned the bourgeoisie. Has anyone ever asked himself whence comes the tender sadness vibrating even in the supreme merriment of the *Fledermaus-bacchanalia*; a sadness that smiles at and with the frivolity? In the midst of his bubbling lightness there re-echoed from afar the sighs of a declining period.

At the moment when the *Fledermaus* first faced the foot-lights, the gaiety of its stage characters, their problems and their exuberance, belong in reality to the past. It was humanity before the crash, humanity already in disguise: humanity hardly less ironically sad than Offenbach's gods. And as sweet as every once-upon-a-time.

### CHAMPAGNE

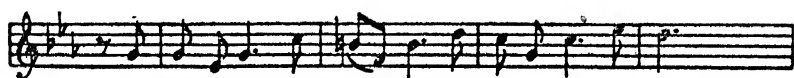
E-E sharp-F sharp. Three chords, shot off quickly side by side become three champagne bottles. Three corks have jumped away, and now the coldly steaming mousseux foams into our consciousness. The overture to *Fledermaus* is very much like a sonata. There is the exposé, here the main theme with the short transition to the sub-dominant, to the subsidiary movement. But Strauss had no desire to write a sonata. The *Fledermaus* overture is a potpourri and makes no pretence at being anything else. Only his unerring taste (the most unerring since Rossini) was capable of welding so much wild beauty into the likeness of a sonata. In spite of some superficiality at its conclusion and incompleteness in the reprise,

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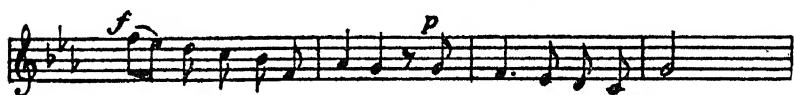
the *Fledermaus* overture with its tense introduction, is slowly conceived central movement, its flashing stretta, sweeps to eternity in closed formation.

And now the first act begins. It belongs to the maid Adele and her mistress Rosalinde. A man who had written waltzes of genius for a quarter of a century might have been forgiven for non-acquaintance with the dramatic characteristics of the human voice. But Strauss had nothing to learn in that field. His music alone would individualize the characters on the stage. Not one note of Adele's songs could have belonged to the part of Rosalinde or vice versa. Laughing is the basic feature of Adele's character; and therewith of her singing. She laughs away her troubles, laughs in the first scene at a letter she holds in her hand. Her laughter bubbles up in the second act when she puts Eisenstein to shame. And in the third act her laughter is rewarded. It becomes conscious acting to be judged by connoisseurs.

Rosalinde's part fits her as the laugh-cascades fit Adeline. Rosalinde is the most womanly operatic heroine since *Così Fan Tutte*. Her moderato espressivo:



So muss al-lein ich blei-ben, acht Ta-ge oh-ne Dich!



Wie soll ich Dir be-schreiben mein Leid so fürchter-lich!

in E minor characterizes her. Such mock hypocrisy can only be compared with Fiordiligi's farewell in Mozart's opera. But *Fledermaus* is a hundred years more modern than the other; Mozart could never have written a Coda of such bare-faced impudence as

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Strauss conceived for the farewell of the two spouses who are deceiving each other. Pianissimo, in two-quarter time:

*pp*

o je, o je, wie rührt mich dies, o je, o je, wie rührt mich dies, o je, o je, wie  
 rührt mich dies, o je, wie rührt mich dies!

Prochazka, a good Strauss biographer, is of the opinion that this passage ought to bring blushes to the cheeks of the audience. But there is no blushing in Elysium. Like Offenbach at his best, Strauss in the *Fledermaus* translates us to a higher sphere where everything is beautiful and nothing is shameful.

The whole of this first act is under the influence of the coldly foaming mousseux. The exhalations of champagne prick the pores of our skin, penetrate them. There is nothing that can compare with this, except perhaps Mozart's cold treatment of certain phenomena of the eighteenth century, but for that there is a different reason. Offenbach is sometimes comparable, but his shafts are tipped with more malice. Nothing in Strauss has prepared us for the music of the *Fledermaus*. It is entirely devoid of sentimentality, it is all grace and strength. Simultaneously it reveals the composer as the originator of restrained unforgettable marches.

The *allegretto* with which the prison governor introduces himself:

Mein schön-  
 nes, größ-  
 ses Vo-  
 gel-  
 haus, es  
 ist ganz  
 na-  
 he hier.  
 Viel Vo-  
 gel-  
 flät-  
 tern ein  
 und aus,  
 be-  
 kom-  
 men frel  
 Quar-



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is an Elysian march. The hearer would follow it to any and every destination.

It must have been difficult for Johann Strauss to individualize the figure of the unfortunate Alfred who is hauled off to prison. Alfred is a singer by profession and to distinguish him from others in an opera in which everybody sings the composer has given him an unusually high tenor part. This makes him sound like the incarnation of an old popular song. It also disguises his ruffianism. When he opens his mouth and sings:

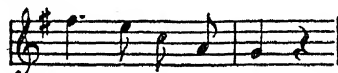


Trin- ke, Lieb- chen, trin- ke schnell; trin- ken macht die Au- gen hell; sind die schö- nen Aug- lein klar,



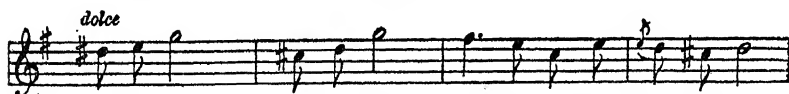
siehst du Al-les licht und wahr;

life seems pastoral and pure, even though he describes such virtues as faith and loyalty as being nothing but foam. With cheerful melancholy he carols:



so 'was giebt's nicht mehr!

*Dolce* comes the immortal passage:



Glücklich ist, wer ver-gisst, was doch nicht zu än- dern ist;

This olympic maxim is a product of real philosophic thought and has become a popular quotation.

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*Second Act.* An indefinable light hovers over Orlofsky's ball-room guests. Around the shoulders of the promenading couples wending their way in a polka-march there is an unreal glow as from reflected light in a champagne glass. International society, diplomats and their *belles-amies*, artists—there is a suggestion of the Paris of 1867, the public of the World Exhibition, but time and place are not definitely indicated. We feel that there is something amiss with these dreamlike ball-guests. Then the ridiculous master of this curious Venusberg comes on the scene and sings his *couplet*.

The A flat major *couplet* sung by Prince Orlofsky could only have been conceived by a great musician. There is feline softness and yet a certain grossness in the volume of the Russian's tones. Orlofsky is young. So young that we assume his voice is cracking—we hear his absurd falsetto. But if we play the melody on the piano and ignore him, we have the most beautiful ecclesiastical Russian, we hear the nasal litany of oriental worshippers stretched to cyrillic basses (two quarters and a half-note). Strauss was not a natural colorist and hardly a creator of characters; he composed expressively without thought, without making comparisons and therefore without describing. In this case however, he does describe, and with genius. His creation is that of an over-complicated boy dissipating his wealth in Paris; a childishly brutal tyrant of pleasure, who throws bottles at the heads of any guests who are bored because he arrogates the right of being bored to himself alone. His special characteristic is grace in brutality:

*And ask me now, I pray,  
why I am doing this.*

This is sung *ritardando* and very emphatically, with the childish obstinacy of the thrice-recurring B flat-C sharp-A sharp. And then, a tempo, the smiling solution.

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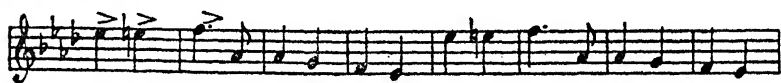


m'ist 'mal bei mir so Sit-te. cha-eun à son goût!

Eisenstein's tragi-comedy develops. He stumbles across the maid Adele and soon afterwards becomes entangled in the web spread by his beautiful masked wife. Eisenstein is of a choleric temperament. And so he usually sings choleric notes, beginning with the wild impatient entrance song in the first act:

*No! Such lawyers' tricks, evasions,  
traitorous to our occasions  
brings all patience to an end!*

In this *impetuoso* of straw-fed flames we have the whole man—the deceiver of his wife, the ball-guest, the fugitive from arrest, the gay deserter; the cunning and yet stupid person; the dupe of the play whose thoughtless temperament makes him lovable. Later, in the third act, he is almost dramatic when he bursts out:



Ja, ich bins, den Ihr be-tro-gen, ja, ich bins, den Ihr be-lo-gen

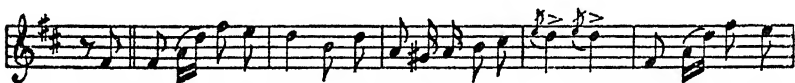
But is this not the cork-popping from the first bars of the overture. It seems curious that Johann should have chosen the most ridiculed figure in the play to sing that particular carefree passage. But this only shows that in Strauss' musical conception none of the mockery directed against Eisenstein is seriously meant. The stabs leave no wounds, for there is no pain in Elysium.

Champagne does its work, turns people giddy. Hungarian Rosalinde is not recognized by Eisenstein. He acts a semi-drunken scene with his wife and his watch. The watch disappears. "This little joke has cost me dear, I've disgraced myself, I fear." And yet it is a mild disgrace, of the kind incurred when one is intoxicated.

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Never has ridicule been expressed in music with such kindly understanding. The Hungarian czardas, the national dance, has its part in this dream-like fantasy. When Rosalinde in a glorious contralto begins, "Tones from my homeland awaken my yearning, bring tears of remembrance into my eyes," Strauss gives us a foretaste of the *Zigeunerbaron*.

The *Finale* begins, that sham conclusion that is almost a new act in itself. At length the champagne song, the kernel of the opera, rings out *allegro con brio* over the heads of the whole assembly.



V. 1. Im Feuerstrom der Re-ben, tra - la la la la la la, sprüht ein himmlisch



Le-ben, tra - la, la la la la la.

"His Majesty is now acclaimed—long live Champagne the First!" This is not a commonplace allegory, one that might offend our sensibilities. On the contrary, it is literally true that the invisible hero of this musical comedy is champagne. As other tonal works may be said to be governed, some by air (Weber's *Oberon* for example) others by water (*Der Fliegende Hollander*, *Das Rheingold*) so the governing medium in the *Fledermaus* is champagne. Max Reinhardt knew this when in his production of the *Fledermaus*\* he made the characters appear inebriated in the first

\*The Berlin production of the *Fledermaus*, (1929) was one of Reinhardt's finest achievements in stage management. His guiding principle was to evolve everything possible from the book and to apply stage craft so as to render the play comprehensible. An example: In the Prologue, the actor-dancer Tibor von Halmay flutters along a terrace in a short three-cornered cloak as the *Fledermaus*. This for the first time allowed the audience to understand whence the play derived its name. For the first time too, Orlofsky—under Reinhardt—was played, not by a woman but by a man, the actor Oskar Karlweis. Strauss would do the same today. The part was originally written for a woman in man's

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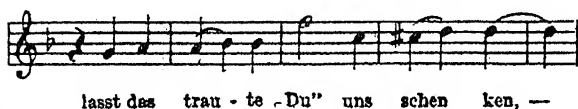
act, a thing no stage manager had dared to do before, because it was felt that a heightened effect was needed for the Orlofsky supper. Champagne ecstasies, however, in the world of the *Fledermaus*, are not simply supplementary scenic effects but a necessary condition. The character of the spiteful Falke is an example. Falke has arranged everything, all Eisenstein's humiliations. It is he who by a bogus letter has wantonly tempted Adele to the ball, and Rosalinde into the bargain. But he is not evil. He is only acting in the refracted lights of the champagne goblets, and then Strauss chooses this particular figure to make the proposal:

*So let us one big family be,  
Brothers and sisters all are we.*

then the fraternity melody begins in F major:



This is as if it had come from an old musical box, wound up by Raimund or his orchestra conductor Drexler. But the strains grow richer, are entwined. No "petite bourgeoisie" sentimentality now, when for the first time the intimate "thou" is brought forth in a rising fifth:



clothing, but this conception was circumscribed by the period and the impression it arouses today is of affectation, there is no longer anything exciting about it. Reinhardt's stagecraft, musically supported by E. W. Korngold was a model of how to cleanse old masters from the mud of tradition.

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With this C sharp, which is repeated, shivers runs through us. At first it is shy and playful: First a kiss, then one "thou," then the three whole-bar notes: Thou, thou, thou—and thereafter the astonished realization that it is being said again and again. How we are gripped by the metaphysical in that sudden change from "you" to "thou." It is not a mere change from one form of address to another; a "Du" can mean more than the thousandfold glorified kiss. It unfolds like a blossom and from its young calyx emanates a moist "Du-i-du"—a word that does not really exist.



Is this act never going to end? But we are at a fête, we ourselves are guests at a ball, and now someone is going to dance to us. A ballet, the couples dressed as nations—Russians, Bohemians, Hungarians. But ballets interrupt the dramatic action and Prince Orlofsky interprets our feelings quite rightly when he cries out, "Enough! Let these dancers cease!" The *Fledermaus* waltz follows.

For connoisseurs the waltz bears the title "The Unmistakable." It is like no other waltz by Strauss. It is highly dramatic when it breaks out, corresponding to the situation to which the action has that moment brought the play. The book says, "Everyone prepares for the waltz." And so we expect a mass waltz, a democratic outbreak of untold numbers of pairs of legs into a simultaneous rhythm. It begins *fortissimo* and is heavy rather than light at first, it seems to be emerging sluggishly from the chrysalis stage:

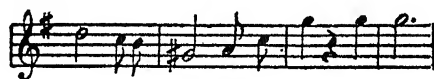


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With the jump to the first fourth-sixth chord something always begins to rattle—either it is the chandeliers on the stage, or the windows in our own music-rooms. That is symbolical. At this point Johann Strauss loses his sole mastery over what he has written. Inorganic factors intervene, material things are seized with the desire to join in the dance. The chorus begins; from E flat it descends to D sharp and rises via A and C to the octave. This difference of altitude makes the waltz still less mobile, but it also makes it more resounding, more majestic. *Maestoso*, a word never yet used for a waltz, would fit here. Indeed a very small change in the accompaniment would make of the waltz an *Alla Marcia*. A march is more appropriate than a waltz to the supreme majesty of joy. If, for example, we march to, rather than dance to the six quavers in the introductory bars, we become aware that Johann Strauss recognized the possibilities of this tonal masterpiece.

*Third Act.* A musical dumb-show. His overcoat buttoned crookedly, his hat pressed down over his eyes, Franz appears. His hat flies into the corner of the room. *Accelerando. Ritardando. Fermate* . . . Waltz-time: softly Franz begins to sway with the rhythm. He whistles:



His liveliness increases—he waltzes with his coat half on, half off. *Tempo di marcia moderato*: he stops and reflects. Where am I? But the waltz returns and with it his sunny mood. I'm in the ball-room—Olga, come here. Marquis, shake hands, be my friend.—

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*Fermate.*—The prison governor sings: "Long live Champagne the First." Hiccup. 'Sh! Pause.

Polka *un poco moderato*. He sees the tea-things on the table. After a few attempts he succeeds in lighting the spirit-lamp. Now he feels warm, he fans himself, he drinks a glass of water and sinks *meno mosso*, into a chair. He seizes a newspaper, tries to read—but his thoughts are still with the dance. Waltz, *più moderato*. The paper falls to the ground. He has fallen asleep.

Genée wrote this musical dumb show, and Johann Strauss composed it. Marie Geistinger, experienced in stage matters, the Rosalinde of the first performance, was dissatisfied, "But, Mr. Strauss, it is so dull when nobody says anything for such a long time." Like all over-richly endowed artists Strauss was so fertile as to be unsure of himself. Almost he gave way to Geistinger. Genée came to him, wringing his hands and rescued one of the most superb passages in operatic literature, to be compared with the Beckmesser dumb-show in the third act of *Meistersinger*.

Then Frosch appears, the prison warder, with his century-old jokes which, because they are the primeval jokes of the stage, will endure for more centuries. The conception of "a jolly prison" (*ein fideles Gefangnis*) has been incorporated into the vocabulary of all languages. The prison governor has been imbibing champagne, the warder has quaffed spirits; in the second act they had rocked backwards and forwards in their bemused state. Now in the sickness of their gradual awakening, it is the world, it is the music that rocks. The ball-guests arrive in ones and twos. What are they doing in a prison? A mistake has been made—Alfred the tenor has been arrested instead of Gabriel Eisenstein. Eisenstein comes to give himself up. It all seems very confusing.

But the woman, the wife? What had Rosalinde and Alfred been doing when they arrested the tenor? What would they have done if Frank had not appeared to take him to prison? Suddenly the



third act, as if it were a problem play, is concentrated on what might have been. Eisenstein, that choleric gentleman, attempts to play the detective. Cautious *andante*, A flat major. "If I slap his cheek, I cannot make him speak. If I swear and curse, I'll only make things worse." As a sham lawyer he tries to discover the truth. Rosalinde's *allegretto* brings him enlightenment on other points:

*My husband is a monstrous man  
I can't forgive and never can  
His faithless and disgraceful ways.  
He spent the whole of yesternight  
With pretty ladies, young and bright  
Who did not have to force him  
But let the villain now beware—  
If he comes home again to me  
I'll scratch him till he cannot see  
And then I shall divorce him.*

A very long B with a trill down to E describes this divorce in terrifying colors. But Eisenstein does not give in. He unmasks in the recitativo of the grand Italian opera.

*Oh tremble, villains all, your punishment is near  
for I am the avenger. Yes, Eisenstein is here.*

This is unadulterated parody. And yet the purely musical value of this travestied "revenge and adultery" drama is so great that the comic imbroglio of these three persons takes us by the throat and forces us to keep up with their mad pace to the very end. "*Ho, Eisenstein would seek revenge!*" "*You dare to try to shout me down while wearing my own dressing gown!*" "*Alas, this dressing gown's accursed. Yes, it is yours! Now do your worst!*"

Happy the man who at the end of the third act of a comic opera could write thus. The "bouffe" style of graphic art, the turbulence of a Wilhem Busch have slipped into the music and bombard us

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with their entertaining tricks. We should never grow tired of them—but Strauss' creative understanding that marries our pleasure to the book of words, knows that an opera must end some time. "*O Fledermaus, your time has come. Do please stop now, we must go home.*"

And the strange little animal that flies drunkenly through the twilight, that no one has ever seen face to face, at last releases Eisenstein from his clutches. Falke, the notary explains everything. He reveals more than is necessary. "*Your supper then?*" "*All myth and pop.*" "*My dressing gown?*" "*Was just a 'prop'.*"

And once more comes the foaming recognition of the true ruler over all three acts:

*Champagne made all our troubles!*  
*Tra la la la!*  
*With its misleading bubbles*  
*La la la la la la!*

Just as in antique drama the fault is attributed to a god and the people are thus exonerated so here it is attributed to the mighty hero, champagne. A bewitching play which is never puerile, a real and yet unreal comedy is over. It is a musical comedy of the highest rank and as new today as it ever was. One of the very few comic operas that the Germans have possessed since *Figaro*.



# The Path to the "Zigeunerbaron"

*Yes, all that I swear  
I can do, and I dare  
For when one takes care  
It's quite easy. There!*

DER ZIGEUNERBARON

## THE JOURNEY TO AMERICA

Strauss was a famous man. And famous men from the whole world were invited to America when in 1872 she was about to hold a musical festival in the cause of world peace.

Boston sent out the invitations. She wanted conductors for her monster concerts. Karl Zerrahn of Mecklenburg had presided over her Handel and Haydn Association since the middle of the century. Possibly it was due to him and to Eichberg from Dusseldorf that Verdi, Bülow and Strauss received invitations.

They accepted. That Strauss went is surprising, as for years he had avoided journeys. Differing in this from his brother Eduard who in many ways was like his father, Johann Strauss had a neurasthenic dread of a change of locality which increased as he grew older. When in the train from Vienna to the Semmering he would seat himself on the floor of the carriage and draw the curtains. Not till he alighted did he calm down.

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Jetty had to use all her powers of persuasion to induce him to undertake the journey to America. Financial considerations may have played a part in his consent. He had been offered \$100,000, certainly one of the greatest sums that any mid-European artist had ever seen at one time. These \$100,000 were deposited by the City of Boston at the Viennese Anglo-Bank in addition to traveling expenses for Strauss, his wife and their two servants.

To the magical attraction of fame was added that of money. The two together lent Strauss such self-assurance that he was the only person on board who was not sea-sick. The North German Lloyd liner on which they sailed carried an orchestra of the Prussian Guards. Strauss, a cigar in his mouth, a glass of brandy before him on the swaying table, forced the Prussians to play dance-music for the passengers.

He arrived in New York in the best of spirits. There were no sky-scrapers; the indescribable façade that America now presents to the stranger did not then exist. When Stevenson landed there in the seventies, New York seemed to him a flat city which reminded him of Liverpool. Nor did Strauss fall down on his knees on glimpsing the Battery and Broadway. That was excusable. Less excusable was it that he saw nothing at all.

Distracted by externals he closed the door of his feelings against the things of value in the world to which he was a stranger. In his intrinsic modesty it struck him as banal and exaggerated when he found that the inhabitants of Boston had erected enormous placards at street corners showing him, Strauss, standing on the globe and wielding his baton in the form of an imperial scepter. It had been meant realistically however. The Americans wanted to depict the world mastery that their guest actually possessed. It seems as if Strauss had to steel himself against the drastic forms taken by their gestures. In order not to feel frightened he had to find everything comic that he did not understand, including the

flutter he caused in the feminine world. The Anglo-Saxon "furor" is stronger than any other mass enthusiasm, just because it is grown on a soil of greater circumspection. Strauss the Elder never forgot the noise that in 1838 raged about the coronation procession of Queen Victoria. Blücher, who drove through the streets of London in 1815, was forced to hang an artificial hand covered with a glove out of the window of his coach to defend himself against the kisses offered to the conqueror of Napoleon. Johann Strauss was obliged to sacrifice the black-haired coat of his Newfoundland dog to satisfy the craze of American women for genuine curls as mementoes.

He would have taken America more seriously if he had known the literature that dealt with her dignity and greatness. As he did no reading, he was lacking in perceptive powers, so that the most superficial external impressions had him at their mercy if his heart did not happen to be touched. America did not touch his heart and so he misunderstood the innate necessity for dimensions contrasting with those of Europe.

A wooden hall had been built which had space for a hundred thousand people. The audience stood, sat, cowered—shoulder to shoulder, head touching head. Six gigantic policemen were needed to clear the way for Strauss to the platform. Even then, autograph hunters threatened to break through the cordon and crush the black-haired man they wished to reach.

"On the musicians' tribune," Strauss reported later, "there were twenty thousand singers; in front of them the members of the orchestra—and these were the people I was to conduct. A hundred assistant conductors had been placed at my disposal to control these gigantic masses, but I was only able to recognize those nearest to me, and although we had had rehearsals there was no possibility of giving an artistic performance, a proper production. But if I had declined to conduct, it would have been at the cost of my life.

"Now just conceive of my position face to face with a public of a hundred thousand Americans. There I stood at the raised desk, high up above all the others. How would the business start, how would it end? Suddenly a cannon-shot rang out, a gentle hint for us twenty thousand to begin playing the *Blue Danube*.

"I gave the signal, my hundred assistant conductors followed me as quickly and as well as they could and then there broke out an unholy row such as I shall never forget. As we had begun more or less simultaneously, I concentrated my whole attention on seeing that we should finish together too!—Thank Heaven, I managed even that. It was all that was humanly possible. The hundred thousand mouths in the audience roared applause and I breathed a sigh of relief when I found myself in fresh air again and felt the firm ground beneath my feet.

"The next day I was obliged to take to flight before an army of impresarios, who promised me the whole of California if I would undertake an American tour. I had had quite enough after that one musical entertainment and returned to Europe as quickly as I possibly could."

This description was meant as a *bon mot*, but it was not a very happy one. Strauss was assuredly quite pleased to conduct thirteen more concerts and two monster balls in Boston and to do some more conducting in New York on the return journey. His indignation at the barbarism and lack of artistic feeling in his assistants was probably not nearly as great as he states.

The technique by which very large choirs and orchestras are conducted with the help of sub-conductors was by no means exclusively American. Berlioz had used it long before; a drawing by Honore Daumier shows how usual it was. It was only the conception of numbers that Strauss misunderstood so completely. Like most Europeans he mistook for megalomania what was only the consciousness of greatness. He did not know the mass feeling, the

vital voluptuousness of numbers that rises up out of Walt Whitman's poems. Even in the rumble of gigantic masses of humanity there may be order. Why should it be impossible to unify twenty thousand singers ranked behind each other and gazing at a hundred conductors' batons.

Perhaps there had been too few rehearsals. Here, on his own professional ground, Strauss saw rightly. America at that time had not discovered the great importance of rehearsing; at the present time both musical and "straight" theatrical performances are rehearsed longer and more carefully than in Europe.\* That "music must be oiled daily so that it may remain as ready for use as any other engine" is the expression of a somewhat belated recognition of an obvious fact. The tardiness accounts for the fact that the standing orchestras of the nineteenth century in America were unable to hold their own.

Strauss did not understand America. Did America understand Strauss? A phenomenon like Johann Strauss, full of nervous energy, of *joie de vivre* and *savoir faire* was new to the Americans. He reminded them of the Frenchman Jullien who had come to New York in 1853. "He was a Frenchman," the *San Francisco Argonaut* remarks reminiscently in 1892, "and like most Frenchmen very theatrical. Anyone who can think back forty years will remember his graceful smile and his wide, bell-shaped frock coat. His cuffs were turned back over his sleeves—and it was thus he stood and bowed to his audience. Before he began, a servant came on to the platform and brought him a pair of white gloves on a

\*Karl Bergmann experienced great difficulties when about 1850 he undertook an American tour with his very good Berlin orchestra. Not till 1869 did he find a footing in New York. The same year saw the inception of another orchestra that became famous—that conducted by a German called Theodor Thomas. A third German, Leopold Damrosch, an excellent musician, founded a men's choral society in 1871 in New York and eight years later the New York Symphony Society. They were all feared as pedants. The supreme conscientiousness with which America has rehearsed since then is however undoubtedly their work.



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silver tray. Not till then did he swing his baton. While, for example, Sousa's legs are planted firmly on the ground while he is conducting, the Frenchman swung himself about as if the body were all electrified. When the performance was over, Jullien would sink completely exhausted into a velvet easy-chair and fan himself with a lace handkerchief in sight of everybody . . ." Strauss too brought the Americans something of this foreign grace and passionate theatricalism. The Romance element made its impression.

It is certain that America applauded rather Strauss' immense universal fame than the intimate beauty of his work. And so Strauss and America parted without having experienced any profundity in their relationship. Strauss, like others, had not realized that the resistance shown by the musicians to coming in at the right moment—the difficulty they found in keeping time of which all European conductors have complained in America—must have a deeper cause than sheer lack of musical sense. America had a different ear. At that time there was already beginning the revolt of the unaccentuated part of the bar against the accentuated, that is, the sole government by syncopation which forty years later was to place the whole of Europe and its light music at America's feet. Strauss had no notion of this.

### THE PROXIMITY OF ITALY

*Fledermaus* had been a failure in Vienna; sixteen continuous performances before it was taken off meant nothing at all. Hanslick thought it commonplace. That had been in April. Berlin's ear was better trained. From June onwards the Berlin *Fledermaus* was performed a hundred times. Not till then did the Viennese begin to take notice. In the Autumn, Director Steiner ventured its reinclusion in his repertory. From then on it became the standard operetta, by which all others were measured. This was unjust to Offenbach.

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With the faithlessness common to all world-cities, Paris threw itself into the *Fledermaus* frenzy, but before the work appeared under a different title in the Théâtre de la Renaissance a new difficulty arose. The two authors of the book of *Réveillon*, Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, had declared that it would mean a loss to them if the Viennese version of their original comedy should be presented in Paris. They did everything in their power to hinder this. The Viennese libretto, therefore, had to undergo a very thorough revision which was undertaken by two other Parisians, Wilder and Delacour. A new title was found, *La Tzigane*, Rosalinde, disguised as a Hungarian, thus became the principal character. It was an immense success. Strauss was acclaimed. In the fashionable shops on the boulevards there appeared hats "à la Strauss," cravats and gloves. *Indigo* had been a great success and a great draw, and now Paris rocked and swayed to the tones of the *Fledermaus*.

Before this unparalleled world-success was launched, a perfect cloud-burst of new libretti came down on the composer of the *Fledermaus*. All the librettists in Vienna wanted to grow famous through him. But he remained faithful to Richard Genée and the latter's friend Camillo Walzel. Keenly desirous of finding something different from the *Fledermaus*, these two unearthed some historical material. Cagliostro's adventures in Vienna made up a story which took Strauss' fancy. It was as follows. At the Viennese establishment "Türkenschanze" where in 1783 a heterogeneous crowd is celebrating the hundredth anniversary of the unsuccessful siege by the Turks, there appears a world-notorious swindler—Cagliostro, accompanied by two servants—with the object of plundering the Viennese. To the people and to some officers (the Hungarian Fodor and the Belgian Lieven) he makes the most outrageous boasts and jests, manufactures gold, concocts love elixirs for love-thirsty widows, till Vienna is turned topsy-turvy. At first the Viennese are easily deceived. They believe Cagliostro when he

tells them that in reality he is several thousand years old, that he had been acquainted with Father Noah, that he had disputed with Luther and invented the art of printing. Not till his two confederates, Feliziani and Blasoni, carry things too far do the dupes see light. But although the police appear, the talented swindler escapes.

A lesser musician would of course have selected a book with a subject-matter as similar as possible to the *Fledermaus*. Strauss gave evidence of the width of his range when he chose the one farthest removed from it.

It was an excellent libretto. Forty years before Hofmannsthal and the *Rosenkavalier*, it provided material for a comedy which revealed the many-sidedness of life in old Vienna. Though rococo in style it was anything but pallid, it had realistic strains made up of baroque and popular tradition. It was a difficult subject for the composer. The era of Lortzing's German song-plays was past and the resources available to Richard Strauss in 1912 were not at the disposal of Johann in 1875. For *Cagliostro in Wien* the very finest tapestry was needed. Moving crowds, *vivandières*, town-criers, soldiers and a chorus of citizens had to be woven into the music, as forty years later in the *Rosenkavalier* Richard Strauss interwove the elements of the world of song with the bewigged attendants at the Marschallin's reception. Because Johann had not mastered this art he had to revert to German simplicity in the first act. He underwrote the mob movements and the choruses in elementary fashion with no stylistic transformation. What was gross in the subject-matter remained gross in the music. That was doubly a mistake, for anything coarse was at variance with his nature. The vulgarities of the mob that Strauss forced himself to depict do not come honestly from him. They bring him down to a lower plane. Not till the Italians appear does he come into his own. Humor, spirit, characteristic traits, emerge as soon as the proximity of Italy is apparent.

When he composed *Karneval in Rom* the musician in him had still been behaving like a romantic German visiting Italy for the first time. The painter Arthur Bryk does not sing like an Italian. But with *Cagliostro* (1875), *Spitzentuch der Königin* (1880), *Lustiger Krieg* (1881), *Nacht in Venedig* (1883) Strauss became Italianized. These four compositions for the stage show that he had experienced an internal change of front. The Viennese element in *Indigo* and particularly in the *Fledermaus* had still rested very heavily on the pillars of French ballad opera. Now Strauss was under the direct Italian influence to which he felt himself akin.

For centuries Italy had been the main objective of Austrian armaments. Millions of dead lay in the soil of Lombardy. Curiously enough, the bitter feelings engendered by these great battles had never disturbed the melodic line uniting two highly musical peoples in the other. Even in the periods of the very worst national struggles in Milan, where hatred raged around the black-yellow Governors and their German language, the Kärntnertortheatre in Vienna had its Italian *stagione* the whole year round. The highest social circles in Vienna heard nothing but Italian at that time. Rossini wrote original operas for them.

Shortly before Strauss started his work on *Cagliostro*, he toured through Italy with an orchestra. There something took place which had only happened to him once before in the Paris of the World Exhibition—he and the atmosphere fused into an entity. While giving concerts in Trieste, Rome, Naples, he discovered that that was his own atmosphere. This was his proper musical environment. Not that he committed extravagances in the way of drinking wine or seeing the sights. A northerner might have done so. During these months Strauss lived as economically as an Italian to whom Italy is something natural. Only his blood had recollected Italy. The result was that he brought Italy to Vienna. Much stranger was the way Italy reacted to Strauss' dances. Theodor

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Billroth, to whom, as to so many Viennese doctors, music meant a second life, traveled through Italy shortly after Strauss had done so. He wrote to Hanslick how amazed he was to find that nothing but Strauss melodies were to be heard everywhere. The melon-sellers in Naples, the gondoliers in Venice, the shepherd on the Campagna—all whistled Strauss.

From this Italy Strauss brought back his *Cagliostro* waltz, the aria that Cagliostro's confederate Blasoni sings with the rejuvenated widow during the dance. In its assured style its effect at first is as disconcerting as a Verdi parody.

Könnst ich mit Ihnen fliegen durchs Leben, an Ihrer

*un poco lento. a tempo.*

*un poco lento.*

Sete dahin zu schweben, *sempre allegro* Ihnen so nah, o welche Wonne, *felicità*

Immediately afterwards one feels that it is serious. That is how the Italian in Strauss sings to the Viennese woman hanging on his arm. And then the third and most amazing impression: this Verdi aria is after all one of the most Viennese waltzes that Johann Strauss ever wrote. At the first performance the audience, "who were acquainted with Verdi and Strauss singly, but not as a contrapuntal unity," were brought up to such a frenzy that Girardi

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and Madame Wieser were several times compelled by the frantic applause to stop and start afresh.

In combining the Viennese note with the Italian, Strauss has found his true style. He should not have copied Offenbach as he did in *Prinz Methusalem* (1877). The sarcastic libretto presented to him by Victor Wilder and Delacour, to which he was expected to write sarcastic music, took him outside his own sphere. The result was deplorable. Though the scene of this play is laid in Italy the characters are rococo Frenchmen. The plot relates of love intrigues and questions of inheritance, but the only valuable part of his music is contained in a few arias and waltz finales which have hardly any connection with it.

His wealth of inspiration was his own undoing in subjects such as these which were unworthy of his genius. His melodies were ready to hand and he used them almost indiscriminately before the picture called up by the words had formed in his mind. Another example of this is the ridiculous comedy called *Blinde Kuh* by Kneisel, to which he wrote music, when he was in his seventies.

Much more closely allied to Strauss was the operatic atmosphere in the *Spitzentuch der Königin*. The gist of its story (by Heinrich Bohrmann) is as follows: In Lisbon there is a King on the throne who is still a minor and about whom the Prime Minister ties strings. His Queen desires to change all this. She writes on her lace handkerchief the words, "A Queen loves you, yet you are no King." The poet Cervantes, who resides at the Court, is on the side of the Queen against the Prime Minister. With the help of one of the ladies of the Court he succeeds in inducing the King to read aloud at the opening of the Cortes, not the prepared King's speech, but the declaration of his own majority. The Prime Minister revenges himself on Cervantes by suggesting to the King that the words on the lace handkerchief had not been intended for him, the Queen's husband; they were a declaration of love by

the faithless Queen addressed to the poet, Cervantes. The credulous and immature King thereupon sends the Queen to a convent and banishes Cervantes.

In the last act the tangle is resolved. Cervantes has rented an inn not far from the convent in which the Queen resides. When the King—who is secretly yearning for his wife and to whom the business of State is repugnant—is hunting near the convent, Cervantes manages to so arrange matters that the disguised Queen serves the King with a dish of truffles. This dish is made from a recipe known only to the Queen and had made a great and very favorable impression on the young King at his wedding banquet. On tasting it now, he recognizes the handiwork of his wife. The intrigue of the lace handkerchief is cleared up, the couple is reconciled and from then on govern together.

The general tone of this book gave Strauss no small opportunities. Romantic Portuguese atmosphere, stiff with dignity, but softened by intrigue and humanistic jests; a medical commission that is to certify Cervantes as a lunatic but merely declares him to be a harmless fool; a dancing-lesson taken by the King. These and other motives were stimulants to good music. But the action was a hindrance and the characters were out of drawing. The King's part was to be taken by a woman, so that two women were compelled to make love to each other on the stage, a situation, the *Rosenkavalier* notwithstanding, which is always distasteful. The intrigues centering in Cervantes were empty and yet overdone. Worst of all was the conclusion, "the motivation of the meeting between the estranged King and Queen and the reconciliation by means of the dish of truffles." Gastronomy is not a good subject for music or the stage; it is too materialistic. Rossini who knew something about food, never attempted to set a favorite dish to music. Richard Strauss' recent ballet *Schlagobers* (Whipped Cream) is an example of the impossibility of doing it successfully.

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Beautiful as the Strauss music of the *Spitzentuch der Königin* is where it illustrates hand-made lace, when it devotes itself to the gastronomic delight of a dish of truffles it is merely interesting. Strauss must have been aware of its deficiencies when he selected the prettiest melodies and grouped them together as a pot-pourri.



which he called *Rosen aus dem Süden* (Roses from the South) and dedicated to King Humbert of Italy.

The best part of the *Spitzentuch* was Italian in conception, though the scene was laid in Portugal. Italian too was the *Lustiger Krieg*: The Prince of Massa e Carra and the Doge of Genoa quarrel about a dancer. In the ensuing war the officers in Massa's army are all women. Violetta Lomellini, a very energetic lady, is Commander-in-Chief. Thus far we can enter into the folly. But there follows a positive cloudburst of confused identities and the consequent deluge swamps the plot. A Spaniard marries the heroine, but as representative of a third person. A Dutch tulip-cultivator—is he taken from a different play?—alleges that he is that third person. The Dutchman's wife, lost somewhere in the course of the battle, turns up again; she is jealous of Violetta. Violetta has had enough both of the Dutchman and of the war and proceeds to fall in love with the Spaniard who takes advantage of his privileges as a husband. This appalling nonsense—which, unlike the *Fledermaus*, is not rendered plausible by bemused senses—nevertheless met with enormous success. Its triumph was due to the music, so soaring was its atmosphere, so ironically mild, so mature and yet so delicate. When the D major quintet *Kommen und Gehn*, set like a majestic canon, resounded at the first performance, one enthusiastic musician fell on his knees. Praise is due to the orchestra too which played so discreetly as to heighten the effect.



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Very soon the play flew to Berlin and Munich, to Stockholm and St. Petersburg, to New York and Chicago. That Vienna championed the *Lustiger Krieg* and Strauss was an event in itself, as a fortnight after the first performance the *Ringtheater* was burnt down (on December 8, 1881). Hundreds of blackened corpses were carried out of the house. For months nobody went to any theater except the Theater an der Wien; Strauss and the *Lustiger Krieg* helped to dissipate the horror engendered by the catastrophe. The people wanted to see Karoline Finaly as Violetta and Girardi as the courtier Sebastiani. Shortly before the première young Girardi had cajoled and threatened the veteran Strauss into adding an entirely incongruous waltz to the play. It was called *Nur für Natur hegte sie Sympathie* and proved decisive for the world success of the piece.



Strauss with a congenial subject was certain to make a success of it. Less satisfactory were the results when his nature was not in tune with the book. His melodies did not match the action and the effect was deplorable. An example of this is his *Nacht in Venedig* (Night in Venice). At its first performance in Berlin, where the public was devoted to Strauss and where his *Fledermaus* had been played many hundreds of times, his new play was ridiculed. The *Lagunenwaltzer* brought things to a head and the theater in the Friedrich Wilhelmstadt rose up in protest, not against the weakness of the melody, but against the idiotic words:

"At night of course all cats look grey  
then tenderly miaow they say."

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At that point the whole audience took up the cry "Miaow" and the theatrical riot started.

The composition of the *Nacht in Venedig* was the result of some curious circumstances. Genée and Walzel at the time had two libretti on hand. In the one the scene was laid in Italy, in the other in Cracow. The second was the story of the *Bettelstudent*. It was important to Genée and Walzel that both stories should sell well. One of them was to be taken over by Strauss, the other by young Millöcker, the son of a Viennese goldsmith, who had already had some success with *Dubarry* and *Apajune*. Instinctively, and quite rightly, Strauss first selected the Polish story. Without knowing anything about stagecraft, he felt that the *Bettelstudent* would make a good libretto. Two contradictory worlds were depicted, two electrically charged poles which would emit excellent musical sparks. If Strauss had made of this a little opera in baroque "period" style, he would have succeeded. A struggle on a cheerful note between Saxons and Poles was the theme, the Saxon Prince August the Strong having had himself elected King of Poland. Certain Polish dance-forms could not have failed to stimulate Strauss. "Like the coils of a snake," says Liszt in his book on Chopin when characterizing the polonaise, "the rustling company that glided over the parquet flooring—now spread out to the limit of its extent, now drew in as if stung by a whip, giving in its serpentine windings full play to its polychrome glamor: golden chains, trailing swords, bows, ribbons, damask. Even from afar a murmur that swam with the music could be heard announcing the approach of the dancing throng . . ." A polonaise in grand style would have provided Strauss with a great opportunity. Politically too Vienna and Cracow had long been bound up with each other. "If," relates Otto Hipp in one of his books, "you glance through a heap of old Viennese dance programs, you will find that every ball began with a polonaise." Why was this? Was Poland

one of the dancing-mistresses of Europe? *Polonus saltans*—the dancing Pole. The Poles are well grown, agile, graceful, gallant and elegant; anything they were not born with they have learnt from the French, as their relations with France go back hundreds of years. "Was not Strauss the greatest dance-master in Europe?" Period, place and story in the *Bettelstudent* would have been the right arena for him. Saxon baroque dances would have alternated with the Polonaise and the Mazurka. Millöcker made of that rich material an indifferent operetta of which only the vulgar line

*"Twas only her shoulder I kissed after all"*

(*Ach ich hab' sie ja nur auf die Schulter gekusst*) has survived.

Strauss was greatly taken with the *Bettelstudent*. This frightened the libretto-vendors. They were shrewd enough to know that their *Nacht in Venedig* was a bungled affair, hardly more than an indication of a story. What would Millöcker's inferior talent have been able to do with a book like that? So they at once set about persuading Strauss that Millöcker thought the *Bettelstudent* less good than the other and that he would on no account give up the *Nacht in Venedig*. Strauss, uncertain and annoyed, thereupon acquired the rights in *Nacht in Venedig* which he had not even read. After all, its action was laid in Italy, in Verdi's country, in whose culture he unconsciously felt himself at home. And, according to the report by Zell and Genée, there was a chatterbox of a cook in the story called Pappacoda, who contemplated all Venetian "grandezza" from the macaroni standpoint. And then there were masks, and gondolas, pigeons, the "Council of Ten," beautiful women, in short the whole world of the ancient poet Carlo Goldoni—what risk could there be? With such a book the musician had nothing to do but to cover the words with a Venetian shawl, and there was your comic opera. But it happened otherwise. After the failure Strauss wrote a curious letter to his friend Paul Lindau. This letter

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is just as revealing now as it was fifty years ago when it was written. "The nature of the book is such," Strauss writes to his friend, "that with the best will in the world I could find no inspiration in it. Its coloring is neither poetic nor humorous. It is a scatter-brained, bombastic affair without a trace of action. Nor does it require any music . . . I never saw the libretto dialogue, only the words of the songs. So I put too much nobility into some parts of it and that was unsuitable to the whole. There is nothing in this book on which a noble interpretation could be put. At the last rehearsals where I discovered the whole story, I was simply horrified. No genuine feeling, no truth, no sense, nothing but tomfoolery. The music has nothing in common with such crazy, inartistic stuff.

"Farewell, dear friend. I beg of you not to tell anyone of these revelations. But the story is quite true. Only one thing gives me satisfaction—that it was found impossible to prevent the failure in Berlin. I should rejoice still more if the whole thing were soon to be laid on the shelf. Anybody can steal it who wants to, I shall shed no tears . . ."

The naiveté of this letter is on the very verge of cynicism. Even the rich man must not be so rich that he lights his cigar with a bank-note and then sheds no tears over the ashes because he has so many left. "To compose a musical comedy," Richard Specht very aptly remarks, "without knowing the sequence of the scenes, without knowing what mood has inspired the individual songs—that is really a depth of indolence which cannot be surpassed."

Was Strauss possibly of the same contemptuous opinion as Rossini? *A basso le parole?* As a contemporary of Offenbach's and Wagner's he ought not to have entertained such thoughts. Both of them taught in every note that word and tone are inseparable and that together they are a function of the action. At times Strauss was well aware what was needed. Librettist and composer should share the same bed, he wrote later to Max Kalbeck. It was all the

more irresponsible that for years he composed operettas independently of the book.

This not only marred the play; it was harmful to the music itself. There can be no stage music without a dramatic foundation; if that is lacking the music dissolves into pretty trifles and evaporates.

Most of the operettas that Strauss wrote, excluding *Fledermaus*, *Zigeunerbaron*, *Karneval*, *Cagliostro*, *Jabuka*, have evaporated. The collection of melodies was returned to the box of music from which it had been unearthed. The editors who complied with Specht's desire to have new linguistic dresses fitted to those Strauss operettas that had faulty books were in the main unsuccessful.

Italian music was the exception, where Strauss melodies are inspired by the sunshine and pleasing forms of the South and are at least adequate in themselves, though they may be undramatic. But where there was no warmth, where the forms were anything but pleasing, even Strauss failed to make good music. His most ill-judged stage work is *Waldmeister*, a harmless comedy of Germany in the eighties. He wrote it at the age of seventy (1895) but that does not explain the poor circulation in the veins of this music. Strauss was very versatile, but he was no petit bourgeois, Philistine or hypocrite, and it is among such that the action of *Waldmeister* takes place. The play is concerned with the effects on the inhabitants of a small town of drinking an intoxicating beverage, a kind of hock-cup, in mistake for an infusion of lime-blossom. Strauss lets a chorus of forestry students sing lusty German songs accompanied by clarinets, bassoons and horns; the spurious romanticism in these passages must have made Spohr and Weber turn in their graves.

Girardi was expected to play a scholar with a strong Saxon dialect by the name of Timoleon, an empty-headed farcical character with complete absence of human appeal. He objected and dissensions arose between Strauss and his favorite actor. While he was

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working on *Waldmeister* everything in Strauss that was productive was in a profound sleep. The only number of the score that has survived is the *Trau-Schau-Wem* waltz, which Strauss had certainly had put by long before he began illustrating the book. It begins on the higher fifth of D major and though not particularly interesting as a motif, is extremely arresting in its harmonies. In his ninth bar he suddenly breaks out from the diminished seventh of the main key into C major. This is a finesse which is uncharacteristically conspicuous, not for its wealth, but for its economy.

### FLIGHT FROM TRAGEDY

E – E sharp – F sharp. The first chords of the *Fledermaus* suggested to contemporaries the three syllables "Jetty Treffz." This gave rise to a pun in Viennese dialect, by which the name was distorted to mean "Jetty finds the right way."

It was true that they were happy at first, but Jetty was nine years older than Strauss. After ten years of marriage Jetty and her husband had grown apart from each other even more than the difference in age would have warranted. No longer were they a well-matched couple when they sat in their box at the theater or appeared in the various salons. Jetty, the famous singer, had ceased to sing; she was a motherly woman of medium maturity and ageing fast. Strauss needed youth beside him when he wrote music for operettas. His elderly wife no longer satisfied his artistic requirements, nor it must be confessed, his vanity. He was not very young himself, but as a man it was easier for him to counterfeit in his gait, his conduct, his laugh, the youth that his public and his friends demanded. His work had not aged him as Jetty's children had aged her. Besides her daughters by Tedesco, there was a mysterious young man who made occasional visits to the Hietzing villa and who called Jetty "mother." Where did he come from? What did he want?

To Johann's horror he wanted money. Since Strauss had become a rich man he had been interested in money. Many artists incline to generosity as long as their circumstances are straitened. When they have achieved wealth, there arises in them, stronger than in the ordinary citizen, the instinct of the economical *pater-familias*. Strauss had no children of his own. Was he to support Jetty's son? He felt as if he were being blackmailed and forbade the mysterious visitor the house. For a few months the poor woman played the buffer between her husband and her illegitimate son. She suffered unspeakably before deciding in favor of her husband. On April 9, 1877, there came a blackmailing letter from the son. Johann Strauss was not at home. In spite of Jetty's submissiveness, he was now often bad-tempered and spent his time with friends away from home, possibly in the society of other and younger women. When he returned home, Jetty lay dead. Through her agitation at the receipt of the letter, she had had a stroke which killed her.

Bent over her corpse, Johann thought he would go mad. He was overwhelmed, perhaps less by pain at his loss which was so sudden that he could hardly have comprehended it at first, but by the immeasurable strangeness of the event. It has been said before that Johann Strauss was the musical interpreter of an unproblematic vitality; death filled him with horror and was rigidly excluded from his music. He rushed away from his wife's dead body and took refuge in his brother's house. A confused mixture of pain, despair, horror and simple annoyance looked helplessly out of his eyes.

There is an anecdote told by Kleist depicting Johann Sebastian Bach after the death of his wife. Bach, accustomed to leave all everyday matters to his so recently deceased spouse, was asked by a servant "where he was to obtain mourning bands." Bach, in tears, answered, "Ask my wife." If there is a heaven this anecdote must sit at God's right hand. It is as beautiful as Johann Sebastian

Bach's music. The musician Johann Strauss displayed less beauty and less dignity when he appealed to his relatives to make the arrangements for the disposal of Jetty's corpse. He could not bring himself to go back to his house, but would leave Vienna at once.

Eduard looked at him quietly. He knew his Johann with the secret enmity of the younger brother. Funeral, legal formalities, walking behind the coffin—such things would not suit Johann. Eduard promised to do all that was necessary, and incredible as it may seem, two hours later Johann Strauss was on his way to Italy.

Johann actively resented the phenomenon of death and went out of his way to avoid anything that reminded him of it. He had almost refused to go to America because such journeys were usually coupled with the precautionary drafting of a will. On the return journey he had been frightened by a report that there was cholera in Vienna. This led him to stop in Baden-Baden when to the joy of the Emperor Wilhelm I, he presided over the band that entertained the guests in the open. The Emperor had heard the elder Johann play and now he bade the son play him the *Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald* every morning. He rewarded him with a decoration. All this happened because Strauss thought there was death in Vienna.

His dread of death was abstruse. It was not without malice that Eduard made some notes on it. When in the middle sixties the catacombs of St. Stefan's cathedral were opened up, Josef and Eduard bought tickets for the opening. Three attendants with torches provided illumination for the architect and the little assembly slowly descended into the bowels of the earth. In the very first gallery reached, skulls and torso skeletons were found, the dry bones of which cracked under the feet of the visitors. In the second gallery they found wooden coffins stacked in layers. One earth-brown coffin lid was lifted. Therein lay, the torchlight playing over him, a Capuchin monk, a rosary entwined round his withered



fingers. They could see clearly his long blue nails and the hair on his skin. In the third gallery, to which they now descended, forty naked corpses became visible. The flesh on their bodies was amazingly well preserved as the brothers Strauss ascertained by touching them. Suddenly the torch paled. "These must have been plague-pits," said the guide. Then in the depths Josef and Eduard Strauss saw about a thousand human skeletons in a tangled mass, some standing, some lying, some hanging. Probably victims of the plague who had been thrown into the pit hurriedly, minus shirt or other clothing. Agitated by what they had seen, the brothers went home and said to their mother and sisters, "How much death lies under our feet. And we go about as if we were not chattels of death, as if it were not the only thing that is certain . . ." By accident Johann came in during the discussion. After a few minutes' silence he rounded on his brothers angrily: Why had they touched mummies? They ought to be put in quarantine. They had endangered their own lives and those of their family into the bargain. Having said which, he stormed out of the room into his former bedroom and locked the door. A few hours later he ran out of the house and was not seen in the Hirschenhaus for many days.

This same Strauss to whom everything was anathema that did not contribute to life and sunshine, was, later in the eighties, to participate as composer in that dark and dreadful period, the Thirty Years' War. Into that epoch of profoundest world-terror, in which everything from which he always fled instinctively triumphed, he was to be led by a dramatic story which fascinated him. The book taken was von Grimmelshausen's *Simplizius Simplicissimus*, the most mournful German work of art before *Faust*.

This material, which was about as unsuitable as it could possibly be, came within reach of Strauss through professional jealousy; or rather, through the uncertainty that always beset him when he heard that someone else had secured the alleged best libretto. The

composer Zamara was not a serious rival at all, probably far less so than Millöcker. Nevertheless Strauss was all attention when he heard that Zamara had received from young Viktor Leon parts of a book that "had all the charm of a ballad-opera and was yet a profoundly serious piece of work." Strauss sent for the young author to tell him something about the story.

Later Viktor Leon wrote the book for Lehàr's *Lustige Witwe* (Merry Widow), thus showing no small understanding of his trade. But with *Simplizius* his judgment was ridiculously at fault.

Of the creator of *Simplizius*, who lived in the seventeenth century, the literary historian Josef Nadler writes: "In an orderly-room at Offenburg, Crimmelshausen sharpened his perceptions and became a poet. Life daily offered up bizarre phenomena for his inspection, by sending past him processions of grooms and gunners, generals, army captains, condemned and outlawed men. Bent over fodder vouchers and reports, surrounded by the frantic haste and the stamping wrath of an army report-room, he imbibed that factual style that was his best-known quality . . ." Viktor Leon was not the dramatist for the novel written by such a man and moreover he had chosen a subject far too deep and serious for his powers: An old hermit in a forest had educated the boy Simplizius as an animal in order that he should not become a man, mankind being addicted to wars and actuated by malice. The cuirassiers of the Thirty Years' War break into this hermitage and find Simplizius who, knowing nobody of his own kind, takes them for devils. In spite of the frantic pleas of the hermit they take the boy with them, half-dead from fright, so that he may show them the way. They lead him out into the world; nothing is left for Simplizius but to become a man and a murderer as they are.

This scene, which in Crimmelshausen's hands is on the plane of world literature, was taken by Leon, whose language was quite

unequal to the task, as the starting-point of his feeble libretto. Simplizius' adventures in the next two acts take him through war intrigues, idiotic confusion of identities, love stories, revelations. In short, the nonsense typical of operettas returns decked out in military trappings. Troupes of Swedish jugglers, a *vivandière* à la Schiller, whose daughter Simplizius marries . . . How little Leon was capable of understanding the spirit of the times is shown by the fact that he endowed Simplizius' bride with the name of "Tilly." He meant it for an abbreviation of "Ottilie," but forgot that every educated person would connect the name with Graf Tilly, one of the most famous generals of the war.

Leon reported on his story half the night through, and Strauss was enchanted. He had no feeling for the great mistake this very young man was making. And what was worse, he did not even feel how alien this material was to his own genius. There was something invigorating about this book, something of the Lanzknecht, rough and primitive, a breath from the neighborhood of *Wallenstein's Lager*, and Strauss was perhaps the unfittest of all composers to approach such material. Nevertheless it had an irresistible attraction for him. He thought that for once he had found a theme that was really great, really serious. Schiller too had been attracted by the Thirty Years' War. When, finally, Strauss heard from Leon that Zamara's composition had made considerable progress and that the first performance was to be given in Munich on August 15, 1887, he caught hold of the young man and ordered him to sever the connection with Zamara immediately; the *Simplizius* libretto must belong to him, to Strauss. Strauss was a famous man, known all over the world. Zamara was a nobody, Leon was a nobody. No wonder that the young man was almost crazy with joy. Probably with the help of large sums of money paid by Strauss, Leon withdrew his material from Zamara. *Simplizius* belonged to Strauss.

Just as incredible as this is the fact that nobody warned him. The only person to object was Gustav Lewy, who was always reliable; but his protests took a wrong direction. Lewy feared that Leon was not practical enough. Strauss agreed and saw that it might be useful if Leon would take a collaborator even at this late stage. Strauss was already beginning to sigh for Zell and Genée, those thoroughly practical people who knew exactly what the public wanted. Another time he would praise Leon's work as the best of all books for a composer's purpose. In a word, he was uncertain and did not trust his own judgment. To drown the fears that beset him, he reconstructed the second act in collaboration with Leon; needless to say, this did not improve it. The rifts in the book had already spread to the musical foundation. Without knowing it, Strauss was already paralyzed in his inspiration.

The unhappier Strauss grew, the noisier grew the expectation of the world around him. Nobody had seen the book, but all had great hopes of it. Even people on whose encouragement he had never till then been able to rely with certainty, were in favor of the undertaking. How often, for example, had Hanslick, the capricious, completely misunderstood him. This time Hanslick was hopeful. "I enjoyed the fragments you played to me so much that I anticipate the rest with the greatest of pleasure." The people around Strauss seem to have omitted to inform the dreaded critic that *Simplizius* was not going to be an operetta at all and the unsuspecting Hanslick continues, "In the sphere of operetta nothing but your work interests me; everything else that has been played here in the last few decades—in so far as I am acquainted with it—is abhorrent to me. None of these young men has a single original idea; they fabricate nothing but very poor grand opera; when they want to be gay and graceful, they borrow from you and from Offenbach."

The reference to "poor grand opera" probably gave Strauss some

uncomfortable qualms; for when December 17th, the date of the first performance of the Leon-Strauss opus drew near, the composer at first refused to designate the class to which it belonged. He would not call it either an opera or an operetta. It was simply called *A Prelude and Two Acts*. Rigid with amazement the audience found that Strauss' muse was taking the clattering harness of the choir seriously, heard a hermit praying and a semi-animal, semi-human inhabitant of the woods lamenting. Just as the public realized that it was all perfectly serious and hardly less grand opera than certain scenes from *Tannhauser*, the book suddenly took a new turn and the fooling began. Melchior von Grubben's antics in the camp were meant to be funny, but the public, now thoroughly puzzled, did not dare to laugh. It was not a complete failure because Girardi was a first-class actor and gave a fine performance in the principal part; there was nothing comparable to the riot in Berlin at the *Nacht in Venedig*. But the play was ill-planned, disturbing, incongruities had been left both in the book and the score, and these things affected the audience disagreeably.

The waltz-romance of the hermit (*Ich denke gern zurück an längst entschwundenes Glück*), sung by Josef Joseffy, averted a panic at the first performance. Joseffy had hardly ceased singing when a small fire broke out on the stage and a woman in the audience shrieked "Fire." The flames were extinguished immediately and there was no real danger, but the people were still obsessed by the memory of the conflagration in the Ringtheater and blocked the exits in their frantic haste to escape. Then Strauss coolly raised his baton and called up to the stage, "Joseffy, da capo!" The hermit came close up to the footlights and repeated his song till the audience flowed back on to the seats. "Your wonderful music and your presence of mind," the sculptor Tilgner wrote to Strauss, "saved the lives of thousands of people."

The work itself, however, was past saving. In an embarrassed

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kind of way it dragged itself through thirty more performances, instead of the three hundred that had been anticipated. Strauss unasked withdrew the opera from Munich and St. Petersburg where it had been accepted but not performed.

All his life Strauss had fled tragedy. His mission was gaiety and the play had been a mistake. The man who had rejoiced the hearts of all five continents smilingly shrugged his shoulders over *Simplizius*. "Send me," he wrote later to his publisher, Albert Jungmann, "everything you have which is connected with my failure 'Simplizius.' Some poor wretch might like to study it, and in any case I would rather my cheese-monger did not use it as wrapping-paper."

### ANGELICA-DIABOLICA

Soon after Jetty's death, Heinrich Proch, a conductor and song composer, introduced Strauss to Angelica Dietrich. She was young, blue-eyed and fair and had come from Cologne to study singing in Vienna. At their first meeting she sang a song from one of Strauss' operettas, was appropriately embarrassed, and flattered the composer outrageously. Strauss was used to flattery. Not only did he bewitch women by his melodies, but he was a power in the theatrical world. He should therefore have been on his guard when the young novice used her wiles on him. But she looked like the embodiment of all wifely virtues and no instinct warned him against her.

He had been hard hit by Jetty's death. His was not a forceful nature like his father's; he was on the contrary very impressionable. To be able to give himself up to his sources of inspiration, to divert the incessant flow of his music on to paper, he needed the uttermost comfort in all external matters. He lived as it were in a grotto and we have seen how even traveling irked him. Deceived by appearances he believed that he had found in Angelica the

woman who would safeguard his daily life; would protect him from household worries and would brighten his existence with the youth that Jetty had lacked. In short, Strauss of the fine perceptions fell senselessly in love and married Angelica almost immediately.

At first it suited her very well to have an established position as the wife of a famous man and to be living in the palace of the Igelgasse built with the money from the *Fledermaus* and other works. The architects' plans had been through Jetty's careful and capable hands, but she had never set foot in the finished house. Strauss was fifty-three, young in comparison with Jetty, but he was not young enough for his new wife who was only twenty.

What happened next was perhaps not so much the tragi-comedy of an elderly husband with a young wife as the eternal difference between a rich nature and an empty one. Angelica (whose pet name was Lili) would have been bored by any man, however young, who had the capacity of a Johann Strauss. Strauss was a worker before all else. A creator of values who invested his time—day and night—in his work alone. Lili was a consumer, not only of Strauss fame and money, but of her own idleness, which is at least as great a tyrant as work. Idleness is much more exhausting. With Angelica Dietrich her singing was nothing but a pose. She was neither a singer nor a housewife. Soon she was inwardly furious with Strauss for having married her; his capacity for concentration she characterized as absent-mindedness.

The next stage was commonplace. Instead of saying that she who had no feeling for music could not bear her life side by side with one who was all music, which would have been the truth, she began secretly to spread lies. Angelica developed into Diabolica. By hints that he was growing old she damaged his reputation. The melodist of love, who nightly in Vienna and Paris, Berlin and London, St. Petersburg and Rome drove men into the

arms of women, was pictured as being a failure at home. It was not long before she found people ready to comfort her. The first of these, unhappily, was Maximilian Steiner the theatrical director, Strauss' closest associate. History has not forgiven Sainte-Beuve for having seduced the wife of Victor Hugo. What then is one to say of Steiner?

In the end the woman went away from Strauss. "The best thing that could have happened," was Ernst Decsey's epitaph on this marital episode. But it had lasted five years. From 1878, the year of the failure of *Blinde Kuh* to 1883, the year of the failure of *Nacht in Venedig*. And Angelica-Diabolica's disappearance from the master's life was accompanied by clearly audible hisses from the Viennese public. It was a soft hiss, not a whistle. A smile of satisfied malicious joy passed from palace to palace on the Ringstrasse. Even to such a world-famous man could such things happen. A man was merely a man after all. All those who were not world-famous felt a certain satisfaction in the event.

Strauss, who for years had been nothing but the "bear in Lili's park," in the course of that humiliating period suddenly felt a pair of eyes resting on him. They belonged to a woman whose name, curiously enough, was also Strauss. As a girl her name had been Adele Deutsch. Then she became the daughter-in-law of Albert Strauss, the banker, who had lived in the Hirschenhaus together with the other Strauss family. He was not a relative, but a friend. Johann's mother had often discussed with him how money was to be invested. Albert Strauss was one of those Jewish patricians who, side by side with appreciation of material things, cherish a reverence for intellectual attainments. The object of his reverence was Grillparzer.

His son, who married Adele Deutsch, died young. The young widow's face with its ivory features and the grave understanding expression in the eyes drew Strauss with a feeling of intimacy



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that he had not had since his mother's death. Jetty had been too old. Lili too young. Adele Strauss had a daughter Alice. How delightful it would be to have a child like that in the house; even if it were only half one's own, if one were to marry it, so to speak, together with the mother. There had been difficulties about having children of one's own—the responsibility might perhaps have proved disturbing to composition. But this was a finished human being. These reflections and the mother's charm decided Strauss. Adele accepted him, although her family tried to dissuade her, and Strauss suddenly developed a practical energy of which no one would have thought him capable. As the catholic marriage law threatened difficulties on account of his recent divorce from Lili, he changed his religion and became a Protestant. He also renounced his Austrian nationality which till then he had maintained so proudly. He was married in Coburg, in Germany. The woman was worth all that to him. He who was so dependent on comfort did all these uncomfortable things, but this time his instinct guided him rightly. Adele, his third wife, was the best. As the *Fledermaus* would hardly have been born without Jetty, so his quiet happiness with Adele led him to the *Zigeunerbaron*.

### THE PROXIMITY OF HUNGARY

One May evening Vienna had wandered out into her Prater. Chestnut boughs hung with white or red blossoms overshadowed the road-way. On both sides of it the people strolled up and down, gazing upon their favorites, the aristocratic families driving in procession for their entertainment.

Looking down the avenue, they would watch for that velvety streak of lightning, Count Sandors' phaeton; the Count himself in the driving seat, a slim top hat on his small head, his beard cut short, his eye-glass fixed firmly in his eye, drawing patterns in the soft air with his long whip and guiding his four restive horses.



ANGELICA DIETRICH

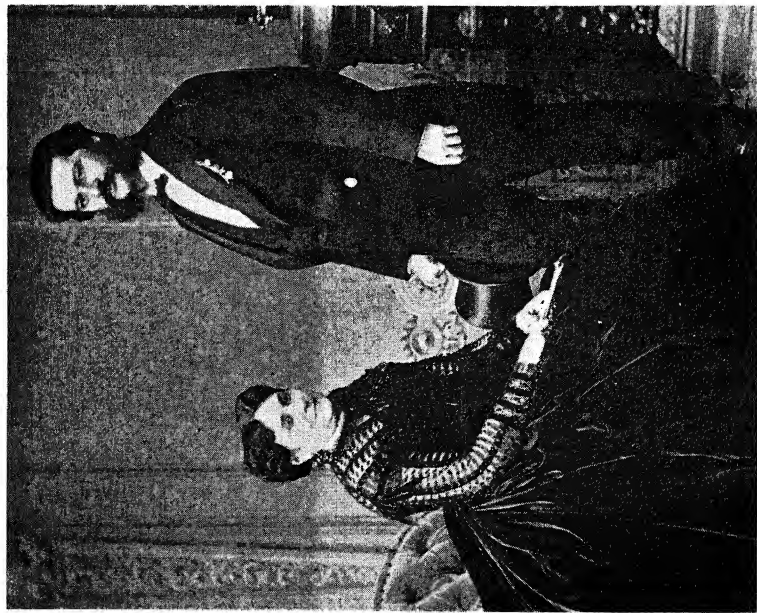


JOHANN THE YOUNGER

ADELE DEUTSCH



JOHANN WITH JETTY TREFFZ



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But Sandor was on foot today. He had descended from his carriage and suddenly he was standing in the middle of the road, loudly calling on the Princess Czartorisky to halt. Her ponies stopped. Graf Sandor grinned. He gripped one of the rear wheels. "Bon jour, Princess Marcelline!"

"Do not hold that wheel!"

"Why?"

"You might be hurt when I drive on."

"But you cannot drive on, Princess."

"You are joking."

"By no means. With one hand I shall hold the wheel fast. Whip up your horses. You will not be able to move from the spot."

With burning cheeks the Princess jumped down from the carriage. "Very well. I take the bet. Done?"

"A discretion?"

"Eh bien, alors."

The Princess gathered up the reins, called to the horses and finally whipped them up in a fury. The carriage quivered but did not move. Applause as in the theater, hand-clapping from all sides broke out all along the Prater. "Bravos" resounded. Count Sandor grinned again. "Well, have I proved my words?"

"You have won. Let go."

Count Sandor removed his hand from the spokes, bowed politely and went his way.

This is one of fifty anecdotes for which Vienna adored the Hungarians and their doings. This tale contains all the elements that distinguished the Hungarians—excessive high spirits, strength, love of horses, love of a bet, love of display before a woman. Just outside the gates of Vienna this Hungary began: with her aristocracy, her horses, her plains and her fiery wine. Hungary, where life was so bold, so closely related to a laughing death. How the Viennese loved this country, whose language they could never

learn. Here, quite close at hand, was the right atmosphere for Strauss. How much more mysterious it was than Italy for almost anybody could understand Italian. Hungary was strangely hot and cold, like its red pepper pods.

Never had the lackadaisical Viennese taken an interest in horses till the Hungarian nobles brought their swift steeds with them about the year 1780. From then on the rattle of wheels and hooves became as familiar to the Viennese as the breath of the sea is to coast-dwellers. It found its way into the more sluggish blood of the town-dwellers and accelerated its circulation. Vienna became a racing city for great and small. Those who did not drive themselves watched the others, praised or made wagers and criticized.

There was only one other person who was as popular as Sandor. That was Esterhazy, by this time a very old man. The same Prince Esterhazy who in 1838, when the elder Strauss had visited him in London, had given him such good advice about finance in England. As Ambassador he had not followed his own advice. He was placed under restraint in money matters, but was by no means impoverished. Slowly the old man would pace the streets of Vienna, keeping close to the houses. His eyes were of a forget-me-not blue and had once captivated many women. One of these eyes was now glass, and the Prince held a single lorgnette firmly pressed against the other. When, in the Spring, children would approach him selling flowers, he would feel automatically in his waistcoat pocket and gently let his hand holding a coin slide into the child's; he never took the proffered bouquet. Almost blind, he would go on his way, holding himself very upright. The Viennese would stare respectfully at the great Hungarian gentleman who, shrunk to a miniature edition of his former self, "still wasted money."

Extravagance was Hungary's key-note. In 1848 the whole nation—bourgeois, peasant, aristocracy—had spent itself on an ideal.

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Defeated, but by no means cowed, her name was spoken by Europe and America with the bated breath of respect. Among all the Habsburg States, Hungary had been the first to raise her voice and demand national administration and autonomy. When the Viennese centralized State had refused the demand, Ludwig Kosuth had proclaimed in Buda-Pesth that the House of Habsburg was dethroned. In Italy and in Vienna Franz Josef had been able to put down the revolution with his army. Not so in Hungary. With Russian help it took him a year's fighting to conquer the seemingly invincible nation. At that time Franz Josef had not yet grown tired and mild under the blows of fate; gallows and dungeons were kept busy. The oldest of the aristocratic families were not spared; the families of Andraszy and Teleky lost their possessions through confiscation, a Batthiany was executed. The Fronde remained unbroken—a deadly "We have not forgotten" was engraved on all hearts till after twenty long years retribution came at last.

It was the retribution of chivalry, perhaps the strangest revenge ever taken by a community. Led by two wise patriots, Franz Deak and Julius Andraszy, the Hungarian nation sprang to the assistance of the Austrian Imperial State. It seemed to be in the greatest jeopardy. In 1866 on July 3rd, Franz Josef had lost the battle of Königgratz; six days later Deak and Andraszy received the Empress on the platform at Buda-Pesth. The excited masses recalled a scene that had been enacted more than a hundred years before: Maria Theresa, the great German Empress, her son and heir Josef in her arms, had appeared before the Hungarian Diet and had prayed the Hungarian nation for help against the Prussians. Once more it was an Empress that came, but of a different type. Her slimness and shyness appealed to chivalrous hearts and her English manner, democratic, yet dignified, commended her to the inhabitants of Buda-Pesth. When Elizabeth of Austria shook hands

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with Count Andraszy, reconciliation and the Double Monarchy were born. Everything that the Hungarians had demanded with never ceasing tenacity was now granted to them: they were a separate state, they had their own army and their own Parliament. Above all, they had their own King. The Austrian Emperor was to be crowned King of Hungary in Buda-Pesth.

The coronation of Franz Josef took place one year later in the Church of St. Matthew. The crown of St. Stephen which Bartholomäus Szemere, President of the revolutionary government, had had buried in the ground in 1849 was now, in chivalrous revenge set by Count Andraszy on the head of the man who at the time had confirmed the sentence of death on members of his own family. The people, who understood all these gestures, thundered "Eljen" across the square. On the Danube bridge the blast of air from the shouts was so powerful that the horse on which the Premier was riding was literally blown aside.

This was the country, those were the people that began just outside the gates of Vienna. With breathless suspense the Viennese followed their fortunes. It was the land of horse trainers, of bold men and beautiful women, the land of that successful policy that had wrested democracy and a constitution from the Imperial house. With enthusiastic sympathy Vienna looked forward towards the sunrise that seemed to be coming to dazzle them from the East.

### THE ZIGEUNERBARON

The history of the *Zigeunerbaron* began in Buda-Pesth, where Strauss was conducting the first performance of his *Lustiger Krieg*. At the instigation of his wife Adele he paid a visit to Maurus Jokai, the Hungarian Balzac and the living embodiment of Hungarian national qualities. First and foremost he was a narrator and in a hundred volumes of the past and present he had captured

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the day-laborer and the landed proprietor, the lawyer and the merchant, the city and the village. Moreover, he was a teller of fairy-tales, of fables and stories as in the *Arabian Nights*, which never allowed one to forget that hardly two hundred years before a Turkish Pasha had dwelt in the castle on Ofen-Pest.

Maurus Jokai told Strauss and Adele, who were extremely attentive listeners, the content of his novel *Saffi*. The action takes place in the eighteenth century. Sandor Barinkay's father had been banished from Hungary by the Austrian government. In consequence of a political amnesty young Sandor is enabled to return; the royal commissioner gives his estate back to him. But the years during which it had lain uncultivated have made a desert of it, on which poor gypsies now disport themselves. Adjoining Sandor's neglected estate is that of the "Swine-King" Zsupan. This shrewd parvenu proletarian had a daughter who is a lady by education, Arsena by name. She takes Sandor's fancy, but the suitor is unlucky—Arsena rejects him. She will marry no one but a baron. Sandor is offended and goes to the gypsies for company; here the girl Saffi seems to him to be the enchanting embodiment of his own homelessness. They are united—without "bell, book or candle"—and he is proclaimed Chief by the gypsy host. Now he is a baron, though not quite what proud Arsena had designed for herself; he is the "Gypsy Baron" (*Zigeunerbaron*).

The old gypsy-woman Czipra has meanwhile told him of the treasure that his father had buried in the waste land before going into banishment. Sandor Barinkay digs and turns up the treasure. There are great rejoicings, but these are disturbed by the threat that the amnesty may be withdrawn. The secretion of the hoard was a punishable offense. There then appears the Supreme Companion of the Guard, Count Homonay, at the head of his hussars and announces that there is war in Spain. Austria is recruiting in



all her provinces. Barinkay's heroic blood flames up—he gives his treasure to the War Fund and himself to the recruiting forces. He and his gypsies become soldiers.

The concluding scene is laid in Vienna. The population is awaiting the return of the victorious troops. On account of brave deeds in Spain, Barinkay has now been ennobled in earnest; he receives his patent. The newly created baron then marries, not Zsupan's daughter, but Saffi, who, as now appears, was not born under the straw roofs of the Puszta, but in the King's castle at Ofen. The last Turkish Pasha, when he fled, had left this child behind.

The happenings of Maurus Jokai's tale were particularly apt just then. Banishment, lands going to waste, return, buried jewels; these things were uncannily modern. Between 1848 and 1868 this fitted romantic reality in Hungary. Barinkay the returning emigrant with his patriotism, his pride and his swift reactions was a genuine Hungarian figure. The gypsy world, socially so far beneath the Hungarian world, was both a foil to and a reflection of Hungarian restlessness. It struck a full chord in Strauss: Zsupan's pomposity, Homonay's cavalry spirit, each and every figure carried its own music. As continuous summer lightning can rule over a whole evening, so these happenings brought forth the clang of cymbals.

When Europe looked at Hungary, it was not solely interested in her politics. For fifty years it had been listening to a great volume of music rising up from the Puszta. Seen from an historical point of view, Europe had experienced Hungarian gypsies for the first time at the Vienna Congress. At home they were kept by great magnates as "music-lackeys." Every single one of them was a magician and a genius. Their violins had tones that were clear as the ripples of a brook rolling over moss—and the next moment they were deep rifts in the earth with flames shooting out of them. This gypsy music was older than that of the Europeans, it may

have been the lost music of the Indians; its unregulated proximity to Nature bewitched the hearers. The music of cultural nations, measured by these outbursts, seemed to be nothing but a social game, a domestication of instincts and impulses. They were freed as soon as the gypsies took up their fiddles and began to improvise in a minor key. Augmented fourths, diminished sixths and raised sevenths scattered their sparks like fireworks. And these Bengal lights would herald themes—not with two or four—but with three, six and nine modulations. The sharp change of tempo practiced by Bihary, Kecskemety and Sarkozy on their violins reflected the temperaments of natural man still unspoilt.

For a while Europe and the music of the gypsies had marched side by side. Then came Liszt, and with him their relationship was transformed in accordance with the ideology of the day. European music now became "international"; Hungarian-gypsy music was "national music." From the beginning of the forties the great watchword in Europe was "liberations of the nations." The central State was the enemy, whether its name was Austria or Russia. With his book on Chopin, Liszt did not quite succeed in making the delicate musician a Polish battering-ram against czardom; but—with the literary elevation of gypsy music to a revolutionary component part of the Hungarian national consciousness soul he accomplished his purpose.

Personal elements played a part in Liszt's championship of this cause. When he re-visited his home, which he had left at a very early age, he was already the most famous pianoforte virtuoso of his time. The enthusiasm of his compatriots for this young man of twenty-eight knew no bounds. The freedom of many cities was conferred on him and he received numerous swords of honor. His countrymen demanded of the Emperor in Vienna that he raise Liszt to the nobility. These events had won Liszt over to Hungary's cause and made him the champion of the nation. In 1840

he composed his "Hungarian Rhapsodies." He, the most international of all the talents of the century, had donned the garment of a national composer.

That is what made gypsy music shoot out into the world like a tongue of flame. In Liszt's scores there are pages on which no single note is satisfied with itself; all feel bound to start with an arpeggio, with grace-notes, with a trill, with some quivering decoration. "Illimitably ad libitum" seems to be written over every bar—touch and tempo are a matter for the virtuoso only. In 1854 the violinist Josef Joachim wrote to Liszt: "The Danube near Pesth is beautiful, the gypsies still play with enthusiasm, the sound travels from heart to heart; you know that. There is more rhythm and soul in them than in all the North German musicians together . . ." Possibly one of these "North German musicians" was Brahms; in 1853 he too succumbed to the prevailing trend and traveled in the wake of a gypsy violinist, the great Eduard Remenyi, in order to steep himself in the alien music.

There was a certain danger in this over-valuation of gypsy music, but European culture was strong enough to bear a considerable load of foreign matter without crumbling. The composition of the *Zigeunerbaron* was undertaken at a time when the *bacillus hungaricus* had spent some of its force. That suited Strauss who could hardly have considered writing a purely Magyar opera. His whole being was Austrian and therefore inclined to compromise. All he wanted to compose was the reconciliation between the two halves of the Empire, between Austria and Hungary.

Jokai did not write the book for the opera himself, but he chose a man whom he knew well, one who was just the person Strauss needed—the journalist Ignaz Schnitzer. Good taste and conscientiousness made of Schnitzer a creator. Not only did he remove remnants of oriental fairy-tales from Jokai's draft, he even strongly advised Strauss against too early or too lavish a use of Hungarian

## THE PATH TO THE "ZIGEUNERBARON"

musical forms. Strauss, for example, wanted to let Barinkay on returning home make his entrance with a czardas. Schnitzer proved to him that this would be a dramatic mistake and thus arose the waltz entry:

Ja! Das Al-les auf Eh . . . ,

das kann ich und noch mehr!



As Barinkay is not coming from Hungary, but returning to it, the rhythm of the international waltz is more appropriate to the sense.

Strauss and Schnitzer had made friends. They adopted the familiar "thou" in their conversation, because they considered it much easier to say "thou idiot" than "you idiot." Ignaz Schnitzer expended much thought in discovering what was wrong with most of Strauss' operettas, even the best. The composer had not paid sufficient attention to the words. Where the sense indicated a drop, he had raised the musical expression and conversely had drawn falling tonal lines under rising words. Now it is a mistake to think that people listening to an operetta are less attentive than people watching a drama, or that they are less sensitive to faults. Even a lay public feels clearly any discrepancy between tone and word. But these discrepancies occurred in most of Strauss' operettas, because Strauss was much too impatient to wait, either till the words had stamped themselves on his consciousness or because the music had moulded an unsuitable text to its own purposes.

How was this error to be avoided? Schnitzer conceived a surprisingly generous idea. He said, "We will discuss everything—every scene and every song; fix the content, atmosphere, the length. But then you compose unfettered. Afterwards I will write my words to your music." That was the only way, and it worked splendidly. The length to which Schnitzer went in his adapta-

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bility is shown by Strauss' request to him in the "Dompfaff" duet: Please give me a great many A's and I's—I have noticed that singers are very fond of singing those letters. "Whereupon Schnitzer promptly gave him:

*"Und mild sang die Nachtigall ihr Liedchen in die Nacht:  
die Liebe, die Liebe is eine Himmelsmacht!"*

Still more than Genée had been in the *Fledermaus* Schnitzer now became Strauss' scenic guide and mentor. It may be credited to his account that Strauss was never carried too far away by his own invention, never was utterly tragic or utterly the reverse. Strauss—on whom words made little impression—still had to be forced into what were afterward his best effects. He had for instance not wanted Schnitzer to use the following words (later so famous) in characterizing Zsupan:



He grew nervous—that was too strong meat, the public would not stand it. He did not realize that it was not a couplet that words and music were creating here, but the mould of a character.

The composition of the *Zigeunerbaron* took nearly two years. Never had Strauss so strictly disciplined his own talent. He knew that this material could not be "shot at with previously prepared bullets," taken from the "armament chest" of inspirations already jotted down. He worked slowly, honestly, doggedly. When Jokai in surprise urged him on and tried to make him deliver up the *Zigeunerbaron* for the Buda-Pesth Millenary and World Fair,

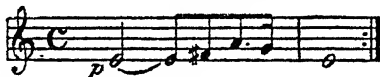
## THE PATH TO THE "ZIGEUNERBARON"

Strauss would have none of it. He left himself the full time that his work demanded.

On October 24, 1885, the night before his sixtieth birthday, the *Zigeunerbaron* had its première before a full house. There was a "Carmen" atmosphere in the theater. The public was tense with anticipation. Half a century of Magyar mania had prepared the way for this. When it was over the audience sobbed, raved, screamed. Only the stage is really plastic; it was the stage, and not Liszt that completed the victorious campaign of the Hungarian milieu.

Strauss, be it said, had reached far beyond that milieu. With an almost imperceptible wink he made fun of it. This tiny peppercorn of mundane wisdom, mixed with the genuine emotion, kept the music healthy, sane and dramatic.

The river landscape at the beginning of the opera must have



been a pre-natal experience of the composer's. It is a reminiscent landscape with its brooding reeds, its creeping waters. The clarinet descends the scale diatonically as a rhythmic syncopated bass, while the oboe in slow quivering waves depicts the barely moving river. There is a feeling of hollowness and loneliness. The double bass takes up the motif and later the descending movement while the watchful horn and the high wood-winds weave birds' voices into the whole. The quail, the cuckoo and their strange cries do not fit into the scale. They prove that Strauss was capable of being polyphonic when he allowed himself time to work out his own ideas.

The first scene begins with an invisible boatman's chorus—a barbaric idyll, framed by horn and double basses. Gypsy melancholy is everywhere, it accompanies the merriment like a shadow. But with amazing celerity the music shoots up and away from

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the reedy scents of the river water and finds its way back to a major key and to humor, a parallel to gypsy moods. There is the chorus of the *Hochzeitskuchen* (wedding-cake), a Strauss *Fall Polka*:



It may be vulgar, but it is lovable too. A very clever person once said, "When Strauss has been hounded to death by the eternal playing of the *Blue Danube* and other waltzes—he will be born again in some impudent polka." The observation shows deep insight. Polka-writing was a relief from the tears that Vienna demanded of its favorites. Even in the greatest period of the waltz a little glycerine was mixed with these sentimental tears. There is nothing of the kind in the polkas. They are physical desire, quite soulless and very masculine.

Saffi's song, *Habet acht vor den Kindern der Nacht* is a genuine operatic aria and one of those that draw the heart magically towards the object against which the warning is given.

The Dompfaff duet has probably been sung more often than any other operatic aria in the world. Royal contralto singers and amateur petites bourgeoises alike—they all sing it.



Wer uns ge-traut? Ich sag es Euch! Der Dompfaff, der hat uns ge - traut

The raised F sharp that melts back immediately into F still holds its mystery—so does the triplet in the third bar. Nor is the *Sternengold* made of gilt. It will last out a few generations. And when after the cadence of the strophe the sinuous starry arch of a German song sets in:

# THE PATH TO THE "ZIGEUNERBARON"



Ja mild sang die Nach - ti - gall ihr Lied - chen in die Nacht

we forget the inelegant end with the fermate on *Himmelsmacht*, that unscrupulous singers push from the D on to the G.

The dark red song of courtship *Her die Hand, es muss ja sein* with its short, jerky rhythm is said not to be by Strauss at all. Heinrich Glucksmann reports that it was written in 1848 by the violinist Martinovics, the earliest Hungarian gypsy to have music lessons. If that is true, which is doubtful, it does not matter. Rudyard Kipling tells us that even Homer used what he heard from the boatmen. Berlioz too, found the rhythmic form of the Rakoczy march ready to hand before he put his name to it. What is important is the use to which the composer puts the courtship song in the finale of the second act. It stimulates like Tokay. Then comes mounting above it the Rakoczy march. It is as if Bacchus and Mars were playing skittles in a village barn. Strauss has sometimes been blamed for giving such a serious finale to the second act of a comic opera. Dramatically he could not do otherwise. The destinies of individuals must be drowned for the time being in a mass outbreak of patriotic rhythms; otherwise they would have delivered up to romantic comedy or even to farce.

On the other hand it was clever of Strauss to limit the music to a minimum in the very short third act. This act was meant to be mainly a character farce giving Zsupan his opportunity of playing himself into prominence. The part of Zsupan was taken by Alexander Girardi. He returns from the Spanish war, a soldier in a scarlet cloak. The proof of his triumphs is his trophy-hung girdle. Here are not only weapons, but watches. There did exist a naive period when this was possible, when war was bound up with quite open theft, the fruits of which the "heroes" proudly displayed.



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General Augereau, for example, came back to Paris from the Italian campaign so festooned with watches that even the Directoire and Bonaparte were scandalized. When Zsupan appears the horrible reality of war is brought home to the audience. Girardi made of this flatterer and boaster a Shakespeare figure, something like Falstaff, and yet quite new through the Hungarian accent and the slight hiccuping of the orchestra, discreetly indicated by the swine-breeder himself on his entry:



His capacity for being clumsy and yet impertinent, sly and yet stupid; his unforgettable small eyes; the crafty walk, the crooked stick and the farmer's hat of the Puszta—these things made him the lion of the evening. "The triumphal march must be grandiose," Strauss wrote to Schnitzer, "eighty to a hundred soldiers on foot and on horseback, *vivandières* in Spanish, Hungarian and Viennese costumes, crowds of all kinds, children and flowers—the stage must be opened right to the back door . . . This time it is the Austrian army and people that are celebrating a victory." The man of sixty knew that that had not happened very often.

The audience was so enthusiastic that—"If I am not very much mistaken (Strauss wrote to Schnitzer) we shall earn a great deal of money by our joint work." Through Jauner's brilliant stage-setting, the genuine colors, scents, gypsies, rags and straw he brought to the theater through Streitmann's radiant Barinkay and Grete Collin's Saffi this hope became reality. At the very first series of performances in Vienna it ran for eighty-four nights in succession. And like a darting flame the Viennese success of the *Zigeunerbaron* coursed round the whole earth.

# 11

## The Last Days

*An old Viennese Court  
official used to say,  
"To be quite exact,  
the Emperor Franz Josef  
reigned till the death  
of Johann Strauss."*

ERNST DECSEY

### THE LAST DAYS

Strauss' stage career is one long complaint that he could not find a librettist, and only once in his life did he meet his equal as a creative artist. That was Alexander Girardi, the actor. Girardi was for many years the keeper of Strauss' conscience in artistic matters, his standard, his arbiter of taste and even his stimulus. His eyes shut, Strauss would visualize him, the impressive play of wrinkles round the half-terrified, half-artful glance, the whole man a thin, expressive mouthpiece for the topical verses he was singing.

Girardi, a locksmith's apprentice from Graz, Italian by blood, came to Vienna at the age of twenty-one. The year 1871, in which Strauss conquered the stage with his *Indigo*, was also the year that brought Girardi from the provinces to Strampfer's *Tuchlauben Theater*. This was a little theater devoted to farces, a trifling offshoot of the culture of humor that was at that time branching out

over Vienna. No more than three years earlier Girardi had stood in his locksmith's overalls in Graz, reciting to himself and having his ears boxed as frequently as Father Strauss during his apprenticeship to the book-binder. Then the patronage of his female admirers had enabled him to leave his work behind him and attain his goal—the stage.

It was not long before the Theater an der Wien was dependent on this one actor for its capacity to play operettas. Dubious questions of style, clashing traditions of song-plays and ballad-operas were laid to rest in Girardi's talent. His immeasurable art, which enabled him to penetrate to the genuinely human hearts beneath any cardboard characters, silenced for many decades all doubts of the justification and aesthetic value of operettas in general. It was wonderful and yet dangerous, because a single actor should not be the main pillar of a whole theatrical structure.

But temporarily that is what he was. "On your shoulders," Strauss wrote to him, "rests not only every play, but the very existence of the Theater an der Wien. You can imagine how every author who writes for that theater clings to you as closely as possible, grips you wherever he can find a hold, for it is you alone who decide whether he is to be or not to be."

These superlatives were written by Strauss to an actor whom he looked on as a mascot. He had played Blasoni, Frosch (in the *Fledermaus*) Sebastiani (in the *Lustiger Krieg*) and now Zsupan. The figure of Zsupan intrigued Strauss and challenged him to supplement it by another national type. Max Kalbeck and Gustav Davis suggested a Croat subject: *Jabuka, oder das Apfelfest*. With Girardi in his mind's eye he attacked it. Originally the little ballad-opera was to have been called *Joschko*; this was the bailiff, a true descendant of Frosch. As Strauss had conceived it, Joschko was to be the central figure. The composer makes his Joschko sing in dotted ninths. This branded Girardi with the mark of intoxication

—a key to his character. "Please give Joschko great prominence," Strauss begged his librettists, and on another occasion he wrote to Girardi himself, "write and tell me how you want it; I shall not go on with my orchestration until I know your view."

But the music went farther and farther beyond the scope of one individual part, swung itself far out into the landscape. Soon it really was an apple-orchard, through the boughs of which the morning airs of the Croatian skies made their way. It breathed love of the earth, proximity to the people, rustic preoccupations. Arthur Nikisch and Johannes Brahms were enchanted by what they heard before the première: the *andantino sostenuto* towards the end of the first act, with its subdued chromatic fires, the love quartet under an apple-tree, the F major prelude to the third act. How much there was that was new in the bars written by the man of seventy. Today perhaps we can judge even better how astonishingly Strauss, with this Slav manner of composing, anticipated the coming decade. Agitated chords of the seventh, incessantly pressing onwards, gush over into the twentieth century, into the Lehar epoch.

That *Jabuka* met with little success is one of the incomprehensible phenomena of Viennese life. It was a demonstration of the presumption of a public which has been over-abundantly served for years. If Strauss had been less productive, this work of his at the age of seventy would have been acclaimed with jubilation. As it was, not even Girardi was able to gain permanent notice for it. That meant a great deal because he was boundlessly popular. He had the strange power of making the beholder believe that his own personality was reflected in the actor. The consequence was that everyone imitated him. Hermann Bahr remarks on the "strong suggestive power of an unconscious double." "You should listen to a soldier courting his cook; or watch a young gentleman of so-called good society; they all intone their words like Girardi,

they all have his manner of poking the head forward, of moving the fingers. That for the last twenty years every actor down to the last province, when he is trying to be irresistible, copies the vulgar and yet mysterious, quiveringly agitated voice in which Girardi speaks, that they all assume his innocently cynical gestures, would not mean much. But there is not a young man among us, who, when approaching a girl, does not involuntarily mimic him . . ."

Something consciously parodistic that had not existed before crept into the best society through the influence of Girardi. People assumed rustic simplicity, whereas before it had been fashionable to pretend to be cleverer than one really was. Speech was distorted in such a way that people spoke—intentionally—as if they belonged to the uneducated petite bourgeoisie and had just learned High German. Ministers, privy councillors, generals and merchants—all followed suit, just because the former locksmith's apprentice amused himself by talking in that affected way.

He was like all of them; and in addition he was as full of whimsies as any diva. Strauss anxiously courted his favors. When after many years of working together they at last proposed to call each other "Du," Strauss wrote him an affectionate but very respectful letter in which the fact of their mutual agreement to say "Du" was insisted on as if he were afraid it might be retracted.

At times when they were both on holiday at Ischl a servant carrying a lantern on some nights when darkness lay on the mountains like a hood, would bear a love-letter across the street. The sender was Johann Strauss, and the addressee Alexander Girardi. It would be marked "urgent" with a precautionary admonition that if the actor were asleep he was not to be awakened. The Theater an der Wien never had a diva who was so important to Strauss as Girardi. He died nearly twenty years later than Strauss, just as he had been called to the Burgtheater, an event for which

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he, like Raimund, had waited a long time. Smiling like a coquette, he would say that "he did not really belong there, as he was only an actor of the people."

In his ambiguous, prickly humility Girardi was the perfect mirror of Old Austria. His smile, through which tears could be felt, healed as with an ointment the secret ills from which the realm of the Emperor Franz Josef was suffering, in spite of its great external brilliance.

A pious fraud comforted Girardi's last hours. One of his legs had been amputated. Professor Funke, a doctor and a man of heart and understanding, had so camouflaged the gigantic bandage that the master of deception was deceived. Girardi believed to the last that only his big toe had been amputated. Smiling he asked the Professor whether that fact would not make it difficult for him to appear on the boards. Thereupon the surgeon, avoiding a lie, answered, "That fact—certainly not." And so Girardi never learnt his fate.

## THE KAISERWALZER

Strauss knew the loneliness of every man who has become an idol of the public. When after an interval of twenty years, he once again entered St. Petersburg the Russian police had to clear the whole district in the neighborhood of the station. What, he wondered, did these hundreds of thousands of people want of him? When they have all gone home, man remains alone with his work.

In 1888, Franz Josef had reigned for forty years. He was fifty-eight, by no means an old man and not yet the mythical figure he was to become by the time he died as a great-grandfather. But it was then that he began to be "the old Emperor." Forty years. How many stages had he gone through, how many ideas had been born to him, died and given place to others! He was immeasurably

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popular in his wide realm embracing many peoples, and yet he was completely unknown. Was he mild? Some said that by nature he was rigid, but that under the blows of fate he had learned how to forgive. He lived as simply as any bourgeois, but he was never jovial as his grandfather Franz, or the worried rather simple Ferdinand had been: This Emperor surrounded himself with no Spanish ceremonies, gave himself no baroque airs, and yet he was ringed in by a mystic aloofness. Was he a good general? He had always fought disastrously, had lost Italy to the French in 1859, and in 1866 the whole of Germany to the Prussians. But on December 2nd everyone did homage to him as Vienna had never done homage to any ruler. They did honor to his noblesse, his incorruptible rectitude, but most of all to the man who had once sighed to a municipal deputation, "Gentleman, my hand is unlucky . . ." And that is what had made that hand mild. The aura of personal misfortune—he had lost the heir to his throne, and nobody was to inherit it—was so strongly about Franz Josef that even then, at the height of his power, it was felt by all that "love must make up to him for it." The new Vienna that he had created laid at his feet a two volume work. Strauss honored him more permanently through his most beautiful waltz—the *Kaiserwalzer*. Obviously, no note of byzantine jubilation enters into and disturbs it. It begins with a march of 74 soft bars, shadowy, graceful, beautiful. A visit to Mozart:



This beginning is reminiscent of the officers' march from *Così fan Tutte*, and like it is an indication, not a part of the scene. It is "musical scenery"; it passes by but it does not approach. It is very discreet, which is not typical of Strauss; here discretion seems imposed by the exalted subject. Strauss possibly wrote nothing more

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beautiful—and nothing less like Strauss as the Viennese dance enthusiasts conceived him—than this march which excites by its very tranquillity. With its *alla-Turca* motives:



he recalls the splendor of the *janizaries* in the age of that Josef II whose unfulfilled aim it was to conquer Constantinople.

A premonition of the principal motif rises up in the orchestra and is overpowered by the *forte* of the recurring march. Suddenly the *forte* ceases. Where everything seems pointing to a coming *fortissimo*, there is a breathless *piano* ushered in by the trombones. A complete change of spiritual atmosphere, unknown since Mendelssohn. For whom are these *semibreves* meant, for whom is this expectant slowing-down, the heart-beat of this *diminuendo*? And now this *pianissimo*? In rising passages a violin, circling like a bird taking to the air, gains height and a perspective. Then comes the suggestion of a waltz, but it does not yet really begin. The motif is still hidden. There is a moment of solemn preparation, reminiscent of Tristan:



A Wagner vista ends the march that started with Mozart. And out of the Wagner portals emerges at last the waltz itself. *Ben legato ed espressivo*:





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Is this perhaps the expected Emperor? It is a declaration of affection for him. Shamefacedly fervent, of a profound chastity. A Chopin moment. We are inclined to think that its deep peace can only be adequately expressed by the piano.

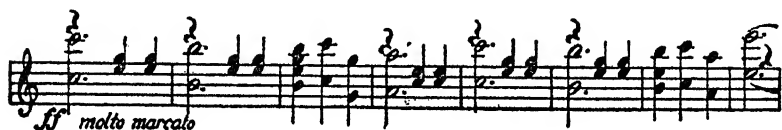
This must be the Emperor. Not jubilant, not heroic, but an exalted human being, near to us only because he has suffered; he is enveloped by majesty. Very calm, possibly a little overbearing, nearly always affable and friendly, and yet the barrier of that indefinable quality majesty is stronger than the muskets and halberds before the throne of Louis XIV.

Suddenly Strauss turns from the Emperor to the people of Vienna. Today is a festival of rejoicing, not only for him who is being celebrated, but for those who are celebrating him. And then comes the unrestrained joyfulness so typical of Johann Strauss. Evoe, Emperor! It is not you that we are celebrating, it is our happiness. And what a number of dear and delightful anecdotes about you we all know. Let us tell them to each other while we are dancing. Are you not, for example, the Emperor of the hunters and wood-cutters? Do you not wander for days in the Alps? Do you not share many small, human things with us?

A *Ländler* indicates all this:



And now the Coda with its weave of everything seen, said and sung. Reversing the overture, the picture of the Emperor returns. This is an Emperor for all classes who know how to enjoy him. Even the



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commonplace thumping that frightens us with its public-house atmosphere and its marcato trumpets belongs apparently to this picture of the people. Then a Mendelssohn blessing which is united with the



principal theme to a "May you be preserved to us." A flourish of trumpets rounds off the whole.

The Frenchman, William Ritter, wrote a book about the waltzes Strauss composed in his old age, in which he compared the beauties of these creations to Beethoven, Wagner and Bruckner. Of the *Kaiserwalzer* he says that "it was the most beautiful flower that the fantastic tree of Strauss music had borne for seventy-five years."

### ADELE STRAUSS

When Strauss married his third wife, he was fifty-eight years old. He died at the age of seventy-four. Adele gave him his "third youth." After his death she said, "I never had the feeling that I had married an old man."

Strauss was inwardly a young man. As his music never really altered—never grew older, or colder or hardly even more serious in the sense of being more mature—so the primary base of the music, the human being in Strauss never altered. He had nothing to learn by years or by experience. He had not the gift that Brahms and Beethoven had of "growing by means of disappointments." He was such a child that one could not disappoint him. It was to this lovable child that Adele afforded the facility of giving happiness to himself and others by incessant music-making.

Strauss emphasized his elasticity right up to his seventy-fourth year. He over-emphasized it in fact. He even had his white hairs dyed because they had something untrue about them. Nobody ever saw him jaded; cheerfully he wore the face of his photographs with the large, dark flashing eyes. This is perhaps most striking on the portrait by Lenbach where his eyes have the effect of a blast of scorching youthful energy.

In the letters he wrote at the age of sixty there is stormy exuberance. "My dear Adele! Very well—I will fetch you from your rooms . . . because then I can kiss you a few minutes earlier. You may be sure that I shall change a *maestoso* into an *allegro* so that I can hurry back to you all the sooner. Your JEAN." "Let us be merry, Adele," he wrote another time. "On ne vit qu'une fois . . ." But here, when he does not know what to say next, the stammerer begins to write music; and he writes to his dearly-loved wife the inspired first bars of the Cagliostro waltz, as if he had only just thought of them. "*Könnst' ich mit Ihnen fliegen durchs Leben . . .*" "You are the queen of my happiness, of my life," he wrote to her. He wrote to her at all hours of the day. If he did not see her for a few hours, he would write to her from one room to another. And when she chaperoned her little daughter to a ball, not returning home till four o'clock in the morning, he would register his jealousy in rococo style. "A quarter past two: no wife. Half-past two: ditto. Three o'clock: ditto . . ." On one occasion he was so gallant as to excuse himself because he was obliged sometimes to write to other people. "You imagine I have no thought in my head but Fritz Simrock in Berlin, Friedrichstrasse 171. You are mistaken. Even if I do write to that publisher every day it is because I need him in order to be able to adorn you. The publisher has a great part to play. There are arrows to be shot. Arrows of love cost money. I am able to buy them through the love-tokens I send to Fritz Simrock, Berlin, Friedrichstrasse 171 . . .

## THE LAST DAYS

This address is the only one I can remember. And for whom? *Cherchez la femme*. Sleep well, you blue-black eyed Adele, the only woman on the earth. Do not scold me whenever I write to Fritz Simrock, Berlin, Friedrichstrasse 171. I write to him and think of you."

One could have wished that Strauss' librettists had written a letter like that for an operetta in rococo style. He would have composed it beautifully. He had not the gift of esprit, but the charm of a man to whom nothing is so serious as the worship of his own wife. The older Strauss grew, the more prominent became the qualities of the Spanish nobleman which had always been present in him. He took great pleasure in horses and dogs. After he acquired the estate in Schönauf near Leobersdorf his love for horses became almost a mania. Anyone who gave him a horse could bribe him. And if he happened to be in a bad temper, he could find no stronger parallel than the one he wrote to his friend Priester after a Russian tour: "My nerves are just as run down as those of my horses. Both the horses and I had to exert ourselves too much in Russia. The horses were too young for the work, and I was too old."

That is one of the rare occasions on which he mentions the word "age." If only for Adele's sake he could not be old. When a visitor came to the Igelgasse, he did not come to Strauss alone. In homage, George Brandes inscribed on the autograph fan of the lady of the house the words: "Face to face with the alliance of genius and beauty, criticism is silent and the critic admires."

The palace in the Igelgasse was large enough to hold a great many people. When they came they were surrounded by two-thirds of a century of Strauss successes. Portraits of the father, the life-size bust of Josef, made by Tilgner; statuettes of Girardi and Streitmann; under a glass case the violins of the father and of the son. Strauss was the first to flee from any "museum" talk. He felt

more at home in the little salon, in the every-day family dining-room.

The meaning of Strauss' life was work. Music-sheets and pencil were at hand in every room. He rose at nine and worked from ten till half-past one, mostly standing at a desk. Sometimes as if in a dream he would wander into the billiard-room; the noble smoothness of the gliding balls, the full, ivory tone seemed to have some relation to his work. But very shortly afterwards he had no recollection of having left his study and touched a cue. After lunch he would play billiards again, but this time fully conscious. In the afternoon he received visitors, in the evening he played Taroc. At ten o'clock he would start work again and would continue without interruption till two or three o'clock in the morning. Not till then did he go to bed. At any time of the day or night he would play his newly-conceived ideas to his wife.

The originator of so much "party" music was himself not very sociable. Not because he lacked the feeling for it, but because he was miserly with his time. When Strauss heard that the comedian Tewele had had the defiant words painted on his house, "Every guest—a pest," he envied him for it. Nevertheless Strauss was not a man who could be alone, but he used people exclusively as a form of recreation. Excessive sociability he loathed. "When social gatherings begin at Ronacher's and end at Brady's," he wrote to Adalbert von Goldschmidt, "I never come home till the dawn appears." And then he was so annoyed with himself for his frivolity and was so unhappy at having missed so much time that he would be disturbed and unfit for work for days.

Even more moderate than in his intercourse with people was Strauss with intellectual entertainment. People who do not care for books generally replace by personal intercourse what they miss in print. But not Strauss. Too strongly emphasized human contacts disturbed him in his composing. In any case, these contacts were

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not allowed to be of an intellectual—problematic nature, to exceed a certain limit of psycho-physical well-being. And so Strauss' friends were people with whom he went for walks, swam or dined, played cards or billiards. He knew clever people. But we most certainly cannot assume that he ever discussed abstract matters with Goldmark, Leschetitzky and Alfred Grünfeld. His charm however was so great that people who usually felt the urge to exchange thoughts with others did not so much as notice the absence of intellectuality when they were with him. The animal grace in Strauss, his smile, his friendliness, his manner of making jokes like a little boy infected old and young with high spirits. That was on his good days when he was not too absent-minded and intent on his music.

The strangest phenomenon of all was his friendship with Brahms. It was a real friendship, not just social intercourse, and yet such a peculiar mating, as if a bear and a butterfly were pacing a gravel path together. The bear in this case understood and admired the butterfly, while Strauss at the most realized that the other was a cultural giant. It is quite impossible that Strauss should have felt the music of the other with its absence of sparkling effects to be indispensable to himself.

Brahms' interest in Strauss was inexhaustible, his curiosity fired by every new work. Not for a moment was he overtaken by the arrogance (forgivable as this would have been in him) of the greater, profounder master who looks down on the more popular master as a mere merry-maker. On the contrary, it was Brahms who wooed Strauss. He asked Max Kalbeck to write to Strauss requesting him to present him with a piece of the score of *Ritter Pazman*. Strauss, always modest, wrote back "As to the manuscript Brahms wants, I looked for it in my study today but was unable to find a *single sheet*, let alone a whole number. It is not my usual custom to keep manuscripts. Adele has part of the *Zigeuner-*

baron, and I have torn the conclusion of the first act out of the original score of *Pazman*. Please remember me to your wife and believe me. Yours sincerely, Johann.—Kindest regards to Brahms.”

We know what an eccentric Brahms was, how he shut his inmost thoughts away from everybody, and that this increased as he grew older. If he was almost affectionate to Strauss it was certainly due to Adele and the home she conducted. At a charity fête, these two “admirers of Adele” wrote on a tambourine in words and music, “Service at the Court of A—E sharp” (in German Ee, pronounced as S, thus making the initials A.S. for Adele Strauss) and beneath this: “For fugues J. Brahms, for waltzes Johann Strauss.” Brahms had an unpleasant way of being icily cold to people, even those who belonged to his immediate surroundings. It was as if he, the North German, wished to show the “Viennese mollicoddles” how hard and how rough-edged life really was beneath all social pretence. The only person whom he never hurt, whom he treated with knightly courtesy to the end of his life was Johann Strauss. The rococo element in the other forced him to this; the graceful superior radiance emanating from Strauss bewitched Brahms, the bear. Strauss was the only person he envied.

In 1896 Brahms was taken ill. As he sat in his box one night at the Philharmonic Concert, where Hans Richter was conducting his fourth symphony, he shocked his friends by his wasted appearance. Six days later Brahms, already a dying man, dragged himself to the first night of Johann Strauss’ latest operetta. It was *Die Göttin der Vernunft*. Brahms stayed to the end. Three weeks later he was dead.

Brahms played Strauss waltzes with great enthusiasm, as Liszt a generation earlier had been a brilliant performer of the waltzes of the elder Johann. Brahms’ own waltzes, written in 1865, conformed so closely to Viennese taste that this cannot have been accidental. His performance of the *Blue Danube* with an improvised

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introduction was (as Lindau relates) a marvel. Unfortunately, none of it was written down.

All types of musicians appreciated Strauss and played his waltzes, even those whose nature would seem to have precluded any affinity with the light-hearted composer. A man like Bülow, for example, who was capable of flouting the ordinary conventions to the point of turning his back on an audience for a whole evening because of the presence of a critic whom he disliked, would not seem to have much in common with Strauss. And yet on his programs Beethoven would be followed by the waltz-king. Strauss' music seemed to have a strangely soothing, medicinal effect on the masters.

Rubinstein was the first after Liszt to recognize the value of Strauss waltzes for the piano. "What arouses our enthusiasm," he once wrote, "what we loved in music, what cast us down at its feet, that certainly died with Chopin and Schumann." But this did not hinder him from employing his titanic methods on Strauss waltzes. In powerful octaves he would allow the melody to boom out from the treble while his left hand built up basses against it like blocks of stone. His face would be covered with perspiration and his audience astounded that so much defiance should be hurled at a mere waltz. Another school of Strauss interpreters is represented by Annette Essipoff. She played Strauss waltzes as if they had been Chopin nocturnes.

*Frühlingsstimmen* was dedicated to the pianoforte virtuoso Alfred Grünfeld. After he had played it through, Strauss said to him in astonishment, "Do you know, that waltz is not really so beautiful as it seems when you play it." Alfred Grünfeld's method was reminiscent of Mozart; he played Strauss waltzes very clearly, without using the pedal and taking care that there was no rumbling in the bass.

With the conquest of the pianoforte public by the contemporary



virtuosi, the coping-stone was laid on Strauss' cosmic supremacy. His little ballad-operas are performed in the whole world; as dance and orchestral composer his successes are beyond calculation. When he celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his career as an artist—his first appearance at Dommayer's—a telegram reached him from New York saying that that evening his newest waltz was being played on thirteen stages.

In a shadowy way he still continued to take an interest in the Strauss orchestra, which was no longer his orchestra but that of brother Eduard. Intercourse with Eduard was difficult. Eduard, ten years his junior, was the only instrument that Strauss was unable to play. Every letter to him begins in the stereotyped way, "Dear Eduard," while all other recipients of Strauss' letters received them decorated with scrawls of affection. Johann felt Eduard's ill-will, although this was quite below the surface and for representative purposes the brothers seemed to be warmly attached and in perfect harmony. On one occasion Johann went straight to the point in a letter: "You always look on the dark side, Eduard, are always thinking that I want to harm you. How old must you grow before you will realize that your brother is not your enemy? You are old, I am ten years older—if we live for a thousand years, you will always find some reason to complain . . . At heart I have always remained the same to you as I ever was. If you would think very far back, you would change your mind."

There were many quarrels in Eduard's own family, a repetition of the discords between the elder Johann and his sons, but Johann kept apart from them. He himself had no children. There was only his step-daughter Alice, whom he loved in a grandfatherly way. He would write to her tenderly as if he were stroking her cheeks, indulge her and try to make up to her for the inevitable disappointments of youth. Something of Victor Hugo's *Art d'être grandpère* illumines this relationship.

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### "BROTHERKIN DEAR"

At the first performance of *Fürstin Ninetta* the Emperor Franz Josef was present. The stage manageress, Alexandrine von Schönerer, much agitated, made her curtsy in the Royal box and asked the Emperor how long he intended to stay, and whether she should send for Strauss at once. The Emperor smiled in answer and stayed to the end.

"No, I did not want to go away," he said to Strauss after the fall of the curtain. "I have enjoyed myself immensely. It is very curious, but your music ages as little as you do. You have not changed at all, though it is a long time since I saw you last. I congratulate you on your opera . . ."

"Opera." That was the word the Emperor used. With positively childlike glee Strauss told everybody this. *Fürstin Ninetta* is one of the weakest of his operettas, but his inspirations were as young and fresh as ever. Franz Josef was a layman in musical matters, but Felix Mottl, the conductor, was a competent judge and it was he who said of Strauss that in "the terrible poverty prevailing since the death of Wagner" he was one of the very few who had any inspirations at all.

Since the failure of *Simplizius*, Strauss had been on the look-out for the book which would enable him to compose a real opera. He forgot that the *Fledermaus* and the *Zigeunerbaron* were the best comic operas of their time—he had to have a "serious book." Before *Simplizius* he had already discussed with Schnitzer the subject of the *Rogue of Bergen*, an old German story dealing with an executioner; but he dropped it in a panic when he heard that Sir Arthur Sullivan—in the *Mikado*—had already dealt with an executioner. He did not want to be considered a plagiarist. He thought of having Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* re-arranged by Max Kalbeck, but unfortunately this came to nothing. In the end,

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Ludwig Doczi of Buda-Pesth brought him *Ritter Pazman*, a serious, bloodless, would-be drama. Strauss set about composing that most unpromising material.

The first performance at the Court Opera House resembled a respectful funeral. "The opera," wrote the unemotional Speidel, "seems to us worthy of admiration because of the serious work embodied and the period style so well sustained in it." It was, he said, more an aesthetic piece of work, a truly moral production, because Strauss must have practiced great self-denial in its composition. This was true. The composer had laid aside his lightness in the effort to produce something solid and worthy. The result is serious operatic music, finely executed midway between Wagner's emotionalism and Verdi's *parlando*. Good music throughout, the words scrupulously composed, with no attempt to curry applause for special numbers. It ventures to begin with a *Spinnerlied* which has nothing in common with Wagner's except the name.

There was however one superb passage that everybody appreciated, and that was the ballet music of the third act. Eduard Hanslick called it "the brilliantly shining crown jewel of the score." "Why," he asks, "does not Strauss write a ballet which would provide a whole evening's entertainment? Do not the best French ballets owe their success to the great music of Hérold, Adam and Halévy? Do not the ballets of Delibes reign over his operas to the present day? Strauss need only be willing, and his name would be added to these; he need do nothing but create a piece of work for the stage which would unite all his most personal qualities into one magnificent bouquet."

As he had always done, Strauss obeyed the critical words of his enemy-friend. It was a very extraordinary bond that united his intellect to Hanslick's, that of a man of his own age who had played critic to Johann's father and to Johann himself from his

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very first note. In many essential particulars Hanslick was mistaken in him. Things he rejected he usually praised to the skies ten years later. When Hanslick ordered him to produce a ballet Strauss believed that he must be right.

This time it was a prize competition that produced the book. On the jury sat Gustav Mahler, the director of the Court Opera, another very potent reason for Strauss to comply with Hanslick's demand. Innumerable libretti came flying in, and the prize was given to the book *Aschenbrödel* (Cinderella). Nobody was told who had written it. A lawyer appeared to claim the prize money on behalf of the author. Many were the guesses, some even named an Archduke, but the veil remained impenetrable.

The old popular fairy tale of Cinderella had been transplanted from the realm of saga to a modern metropolis. The action was laid in a department store, the errand-girl Grete was Cinderella, Gustav, the owner of the store, was the princely suitor.

This ironic conception created quite a good atmosphere and with cheerful courage the man of seventy-four set to work.

Gustav Mahler revered Strauss. He placed the *Fledermaus* on the stage of the Court Opera, where it belonged as a representative work of Austrian art. In the case of *Aschenbrödel*, although he had pledged himself to accept it, his attitude was skeptical, though Strauss never knew this. They would have had a serious dispute if the work had been performed at the time. It was not produced till ten years after Johann's death.

In the Spring of 1899, Strauss was busily engaged on the dance numbers of *Aschenbrödel*, making cuts and alterations. Meanwhile many a waltz-tune fluttered its way to him and was written down somewhere. The gentle sunshine of age, but with nothing of weakness, lay on his lean hand as he wrote. His last picture but one had been taken (Ischl, 1898) resting on a seat in the garden,

his huge straw hat lying beside him. His last waltz had been written, the *Klänge aus der Raimundzeit* embodying memories of his youth.

On Whit-Monday, 1899, the 22nd of May, two old men were sitting in the garden of the Strauss palace in the Igelgasse. They held cards in their hands and were waiting for a third man. One of them, Leschetitzky, was a gentle-featured Pole who was well known as the inventor of a new system of pianoforte gymnastics. The system was looked upon as revolutionary because its main objective was the development of a supple wrist. Till then a pianist's fingers had been all-important for his technique. Beside Leschetitzky sat Bösendorfer, a typical Viennese, renowned for his pianos. He had been in the piano trade since Beethoven's times, and was the recipient of many civic honors. These two were Strauss' companions in the game of Taroc. To win against such expert cardplayers meant even more to the composer than his finest waltz.

Strauss returned from the opera in the best of spirits. He was to have conducted the afternoon performance of the *Fledermaus*, but he retired after the overture. For some time he had been perspiring too freely from the exertion of wielding his baton, and had also been attacked by slight fits of giddiness. Taroc would certainly be better for his health.

He proposed going indoors, and the two old men smiled. It was just like their "Schani," who was always afraid of catching cold, to prefer a stuffy card-room to the lovely garden. So they threw down their cards and teased their old friend. They knew each others' lives so well; whatever one of them did, the others chaffed him about it. What an original person Strauss was, with his Russian love-affairs. Once in Moscow he had hidden for a whole week in the Austrian Embassy, in order not to be obliged to marry a certain lady. What an original person Leschetitzky was! He had

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invented his famous system through watching a locksmith open a closed cupboard; the man had used his wrist as a lever, the cupboard had opened easily and that had been the germ of the idea. What an original person Bösendorfer was! The Bösendorfer Hall, the best pianoforte hall in the world was conceived when he, a great lover of horses had one day found himself in the riding-school of the Palais Liechtenstein. The pianoforte-builder in the horse-lover perceived that the walls of the riding-school gave back the sound of the horses' hooves so clearly that it was a phenomenon worth noting. He went to Prince Liechtenstein and told that much astonished man that a concert-hall must be built on that spot. It was. And he had been right about the acoustic properties of the walls.

When his friends had gone, Strauss found that he was not feeling very well. He suppressed his feelings and went on working at *Aschenbrödel* till three o'clock in the morning.

The next day he was heard improvising on the piano his sparkling trebles and powerful bass-notes woven into themes as fresh and beautiful as they had ever been. Two days later there was an immense fashion parade on the Prater. Strauss, invited as always on these occasions, accepted as he sometimes did. Women dressed in the newest modes crowded round the tall slim man with the dark hair and the glowing eyes. He stood among them signing his name in their autograph albums, oblivious of the fact that he was perspiring and that on hot days a treacherous wind often sweeps through Vienna. He was seized with a fit of shivering, and the next day he was unable to get up. The ballet-master of the opera, who had been summoned for a discussion on *Aschenbrödel*, heard that the composer was in bed with a high temperature. It was more than a severe chill and on May 30th Professor Nothnagel diagnosed the illness as double pneumonia.

Adele thought it might be possible to save her husband's life if

the truth were kept from him. Accordingly he was told that the pain and the difficult breathing were due to neuralgia, and that he must keep very quiet. Suddenly, watching the fire-screen, he seemed to see strange figures creeping out of it in the lamplight. He was frightened and closed his eyes. Visionary figures followed, passing rapidly, hurrying towards a cataract.

On the first of June, at night, he sat up in bed and sang the old Raimund song of the *Mädchen aus der Feenwelt*:

"Brotherkin dear, O brotherkin dear,  
You are not angry? I need not fear?  
The sun that is shining so warmly and bright,  
Too soon will its glory dissolve in the night!  
Brotherkin dear, O brotherkin dear,  
Our parting is so near, so near."

Either Raimund or Schubert should accompany the passing of all true Austrians. The thoughts of Strauss turned to his father, who had known them both. He slipped back into his father's personality; his own life and death became part of the older era he was picturing. The present returned and, fully conscious now, he opened his eyes and insisted on sending somebody to Gustav Mahler to fetch the score of *Aschenbrödel*; he wanted to alter something in it.

When he woke on June 3rd, Adele was at his bedside. As always. He felt that she had sat by his life like that for sixteen years, keeping guard over him. Gratefully, tenderly, he kissed her hand. "Go to sleep," said Adele softly. Strauss replied, "I will, whatever happens." At four o'clock, smiling, he passed away. There was no death-agony, death came gently. His face in death was like that of a man of thirty.

Brahms had died three years earlier. Rubinstein and Hans von Bülow in 1894, and Anton Bruckner in 1896. When Strauss died, Richard Wagner had been dead sixteen years, Liszt thirteen. Of

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the older musicians the only ones who lived to a great age and survived the turn of the century were Verdi and Goldmark. Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler were still very young.

Turning to literature, there was Hauptmann, who had begun to write ten years earlier; Hofmannsthal who was already preparing his presentation of a cool, deeply symbolic, very much altered Vienna, and finally Schnitzler with his smiling melancholy.

"With Johann Strauss," writes Wallauscheck in his history of the Viennese Court Opera, "the whole musical physiognomy of Old Vienna was laid to rest." It was as if the people had been stricken by a thunderbolt. There was deep mourning in the hearts of all classes. A great natural phenomenon, an incomparable force had been extinguished, a symbol of the Austrian people; worse still, a symbol of the State which one unpolitical man had by his music integrated like an emperor.

The whole world shivered when Strauss died. Vienna heard the news an hour later through Eduard Kremser, the conductor. He was giving a concert in the Volksgarten, the proceeds of which were to be used for a memorial to Strauss and Lanner. Suddenly he broke off and without vouchsafing any kind of explanation began to play the *Beautiful Blue Danube* pianissimo and in muted tones; the audience dispersed in tears.

On June 6th they buried Strauss. As a boy of nine, I saw the endless funeral procession, which in the early afternoon wound its way from the house in the Igelgasse. It took its course round the places that had given the fame of the dead man to the world—the Theater an der Wien, the Court Opera House, the Hall of the Musical Association. A hundred thousand people stood there with bared heads and counted the wreaths and the carriages filled with flowers. It was as if the gardens of Vienna were being carried out to the Central Cemetery. Opposite Schubert and next to Brahms, Strauss was laid to rest.



## JOHANN STRAUSS THE YOUNGER

### AFTERMATH

Five and a half years after the death of Strauss a young conductor stood at the desk of the Theater an der Wien and conducted the first performance of the operetta *Die Lustige Witwe* (The Merry Widow). Until a very short time before he had been conductor of the orchestra in an infantry regiment. His father too had been a military conductor. The latter's grandfather had been a French officer; at the battle of Austerlitz he was taken prisoner by the Austrians, but he escaped from his guard and hid, sheltered by a peasant-girl on the Moravian plains. Thus grew up the race of the Lehàrs—a mixture of alien soldiers with Slovak-Hungarian blood.

None of them was timid. Not even the one who wrote the *Lustige Witwe*, which nobody thought anything of after the dress rehearsal, although its author had written the *Rastelbinder* and other talented pieces. But after the première, the singers dragged him in front of the curtain. Applause rained down in torrents. Somebody in the stalls cried out that here was the new *Fledermaus*.

After Vienna came Berlin with six hundred performances. Without the *Lustige Witwe* the type "operetta" would have been lost. People were turning away in hosts from "a form that was without content and nothing but shallowest convention." There had been Offenbach and Johann Strauss, but for the unenlightened who had followed them the words of Zola alone were appropriate: "The operetta should be choked to death, like a noxious animal." Nobody with any artistic self-respect went to hear an operetta in 1904.

That was changed at a blow when the *Lustige Witwe* appeared. Nobody was bored. The people who were singing were real, not puppets and moreover they were modern. The music was gay, clear, and at the same time it produced a number of benumbing

little electric shocks. It was healthy and a little sultry. It was *Fledermaus* 1906.

The musical kernel from which Franz Lehàr developed the whole was nothing very startling. Perhaps Lehàr was the only person who had heard *Jabuka* and understood it properly. His work was the legitimate successor of the Strauss composition. Franz Lehàr was born in the region of Slav-Hungarian melody. The Slavs were infuriated with him when the *Lustige Witwe* appeared. In Croatia students fell on the opera-singers and beat them, because in Danilo, the frequent guest at houses of doubtful reputation, Lehàr had ridiculed the Southern Slavs. If that were true, then in Zsupan Johann had ridiculed the Hungarians. But it is sheer nonsense. It was Lehàr who increased the popularity of the Slavs.

Paris was enchanted. Since the supper given by the Prince Orlofsky the Parisians had not been regaled with so much esprit. The love scene—"Lips are silent . . . fiddles whisper . . . please—love—me!"—was after their own hearts.

The music of the *Lustige Witwe*, though it may be played in bars and cafés and other nocturnal haunts, is actually matutinal music. Can you shut your eyes and remember the pre-war public for which it was written? The watering-places on the North Sea, the Riviera, Holland, Sweden, the Mediterranean? All these were one vast ante-chamber listening-in to the *Lustige Witwe*. It is the music of the early morning hours, fresh as the dew, redolent of rural scents for all its sophisticated modern orchestration. The first sun-rays and the green of trees mingle with the clang of the instruments; it is promenade music that does not disturb conversation. Men come on to a terrace in tennis-blazers, read the papers, put their racquets on a chair, have breakfast; it is to such commonplace occupations that the *Lustige Witwe* belongs. Because it was

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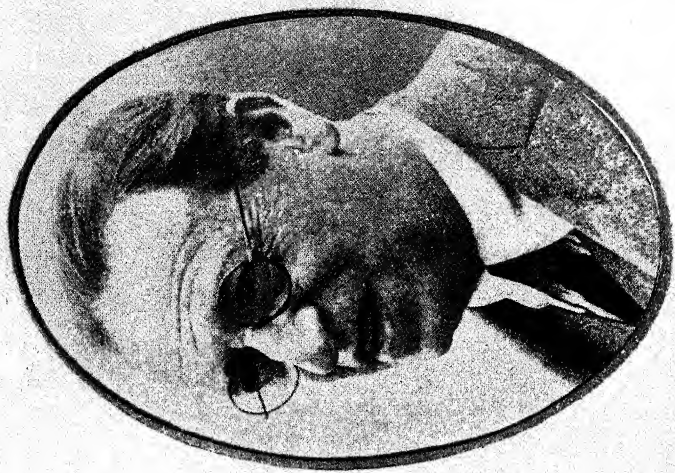
so flattering and made so few demands, its music accompanied people for a whole decade, right up to the war.

Simultaneously with Franz Lehár, Oscar Straus became famous. He is the Straus with one "s," no relation to the Strauss family. When Johann Strauss died, Oscar Straus was twenty-nine. He felt paralysis coming over Vienna, slipped away from her limited horizon, came north and anchored in Berlin. Here he took a leading part in a difficult experiment. This was Wolzogen's *Überbrettel*. The littérateur and the musician wanted to introduce the Parisian "small arts stage" into Berlin in place of dull variety performances. How difficult it was to create a *Brettel* (literally "small board") that should have even a distant resemblance to the bohemian resorts of Montmartre, and why the attempt finally failed are not subjects that belong to this book. In any case, Oscar Straus from Vienna did his brave difficult best. He succeeded in writing a German "*chanson*." He introduced a musical version of Lilien-cron's *Die Musik Kommt* into the merciless atmosphere of traveling provincial petits bourgeois, Berlin young men of the world and elderly cocottes from the Friedrichstrasse. It is the only true popular song of the Wilhelm II era.

Straus had a talent for parody. He tried to reach back to Offenbach, to the *genre primitiv et gai*; he wanted to create "merry Nibelungs" as a gay travesty of Wagner's tetralogy. He failed. Even if he had been greater than he was, he was not a second Offenbach. There has never been one in Germany, and most certainly there was none in 1904. So Straus returned to Vienna, and at the age of forty turned his attention to the waltz. This time he achieved a world success with his operetta *Walzertraum*' (The Waltz Dream).

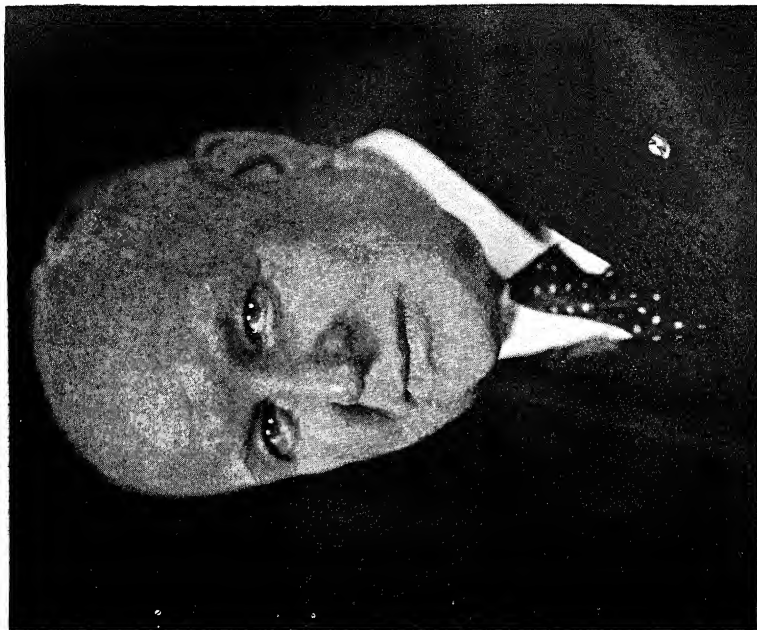
The year 1907 brought two more operettas with good music, the *Dollarprinzessin* and the *Fideler Bauer*. Their author was Leo Fall,

OSCAR STRAUS



THE ZIGEUNERBARON





FRANZ LEHÁR



JACQUES OFFENBACH

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also the son of a military orchestra conductor. The military would seem to be a good school for a certain kind of music; at any rate it teaches self-reliance. An anecdote told of Lehàr's father illustrates this. On one occasion when the son was playing a violin solo, his memory suddenly deserted him, whereupon his father hissed anxiously, furiously into his ear, "Idiot, tear the strings off." The boy obeyed, they handed him another fiddle, and this gave him time to collect himself.

In Leo Fall's works, Austrian cordiality again knocks at the door of operetta. People were heard to say, "If Haydn were alive today, he might have thought of something like the Heinerle song in the *Fideler Bauer*. That was saying too much, but through the *Dollarprinzessin* and its waltzes runs a genuine note of the ballad-opera. Heartfelt warmth rather than dashing recklessness is characteristic of Leo Fall. Lehàr and Oscar Strauss were colder.

The rattling eloquence of the one, the irony of the second and the child-like grace of the third. Take them all three together and you have the greatness of Johann Strauss. But they did not imitate them. They were naturally fresh and original.

Three years after his death, the radiance from Johann Strauss was still so strong that it, like something elementary, served for at least three artists, who were not—separately—his descendants, but each of whom passed on one quality of Johann Strauss' genius.

In 1914 came the shadow that blotted out everything. In this was drowned with so much else, the smile of Vienna, the soul of Strauss.

Life parted from them, they flew aloft and became romance. Since then Strauss music has been romance—let no "renaissance" deceive us as to this. Youth can have nothing more to do with it. We can still enjoy the *Fledermaus*; we can even dance a waltz, but we do it with much the same feeling as the contemporaries of

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Strauss participating in an arranged minuet. It is an enviably pure sphere, but there is no returning to it.

For with the experience of the war there grew up a new youth. Possibly a barbarous youth, but young and smiling. Its music, though millions had died, was bursting with life. The era of American music had begun.

*America's Challenge, and Victory  
over European Dance Forms*

*Music, whatever may be the opinion prevailing at home and abroad, is a vital and integral part of American life. I firmly believe that we have more latent musical talent in America than there is in any other country.*

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

THE WASHINGTON POST

The new American popular music—which was to flood Europe a generation later—was born on a date which we can fix with precision. It was June 15, 1889. Never has any musical movement originated so cleanly, so puritanically.

On April 17th of that year, the newspaper *The Washington Post* had started a prize competition. The idea was to stimulate the powers of observation and the art of literary composition among the school-children of the capital. The “unseen” composition, till then a matter for the four walls of the class-room, was to be brought out into the fresh air of American publicity.

The originator of this scheme was the newspaper publisher, Frank Hatton. Together with the Board of Education, plans for



the organization were developed. The prize distribution was to take place on June 15th in the spacious grounds of the Smithsonian Institute. The Attorney General, Mr. William H. Miller, and a large committee were to be present. The day before the ceremony was scheduled to take place, Frank Hatton stopped Sousa, the Marine Band conductor, in the street to ask him whether he would compose a march that could be played for the procession just before the prize distribution. Enormous crowds would be present. The police had calculated that twenty-five thousand children and their parents might be expected. The march, then, would have to be very loud and imposing and audible everywhere—in short, suitable for a school festival in the open. John Philip Sousa went home and rapidly sketched out something suitable. It was orchestrated during the night and rehearsed the next morning. The festival was to begin at four o'clock. Soon after three the guests of honor and the delegates assembled. The ladies with little parasols and the balloon-sleeves of the latest fashion, looked like summer clouds, the skies were brilliantly clear and there was a light summer breeze.

Around the music pavilion and the platform on which sat the guests of honor, there swayed thirty thousand children, their parents and teachers distributed among them. It was the youth of America, about to produce from their midst a few dozen laureates. Great expectation was depicted on all faces. The grounds were hemmed in by acacias, and, as if obeying a silent order, the boys suddenly climbed into the trees and stood on their branches, their caps in their hands, like cabin-boys giving the salute. This was at four o'clock precisely. The conductor John Philip Sousa calmly pocketed his watch and raised his baton.

The music began—rather curiously for a march—in six quaver time. Was it to have been a dance? If you want to march to six-quaver instead of to two quarter time you must, as it were, lay



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lyrical monologue. The marching mass-individual is suddenly alone with his thoughts. The effect of this soft passage in the midst of the noise is indescribable. Now, after fifty years, it is just the same—tears come into the eyes of the marchers.



In this Sousa gives an English song. In the sweetness of these notes lies everything that makes life worth living for the Anglo-Saxon as soon as he is not fighting. For here is the thing for which he fights and for which all that marching is worth while: his home, his fireside, his parents, moral values—and in this heart-searching, this moral counterpoint written by the heart for the movement of the feet, lies the value, the unspeakable magic of the transparent music that most assuredly is worked by tricks. It is a typical "Sousa-effect" when the depths of a lyrical monologue replace the bluster of the parade-ground. How consciously and how sparingly Sousa manipulates the sentimentality here, when during one single bar he brings back in its delicate grace the six-eight character of his composition:



This passage is in truth the only *fioritura* in the straight lines of the speed march. And, once he has used up this attraction, Sousa takes the pastel theme and makes of it—*fortissimo*—the great democratic total survey of America. Without altering a note, simply writing it in octaves, in an absolutely inartistic parallel, he achieves indescribable effect.

A cry went up from the whole field on that fifteenth of June, 1889, when this music was heard for the first time. Ministers' speeches and prize distribution were drowned in it, because the

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Marine Band had to play it again and again. That day saw the birth of more than the annual prize distribution for elementary school-children with writing talent. Musical life and consciousness of the whole nation had been born, resounding in the ears of the children and their parents, of the present and the future.

John Philip Sousa was born in Washington on November 6, 1854. He was the son of a Spanish father (who had emigrated from Europe) and a German mother. The father was a courteous man with the tranquillity of the ancient races; the German mother was of indomitable energy. Sousa adored his parents. The only peoples against whom he later turned in a political sense were, however, strangely enough the Spaniards and the Germans. Against the Spaniards he wrote his most sparkling naval marches; that was in 1895 on the occasion of the war in Cuba; against the Germans during the Great War. When he was sixty-three he advocated a crusade wherein he was not unlike Kipling. In the year 1917 his marches accompanied the troops sent forth from America to the battlefields of France.

In choosing his vocation the boy had hesitated between becoming a baker and a musician, quarrelled with both masters, once ran unromantically away from a music lesson to become a baker, but in the end chose music. His father did not interfere. An old Spanish gentleman sometimes visited the Sousa family and instructed the boy in *solfeggio*. To the annoyance of the old man John Philip would sometimes roll a baseball through the room during the lessons—he could not understand why the crash of his beloved ball should not be just as much music as the other. The music of the gay Americans, found by John Philip Sousa, was not only lyrical, it was noisy.

Until Sousa became "Band-master" of all the naval music in the United States, the public bands in the cities of America had a hard time of it. Nobody wished to support them, nobody saw any

reason for their existence. The citizen had his music in church, and, less often, a piano at home. And on the streets there were the Salvation Army choirs and the traveling street-organs. The people were quite content to leave the establishment of bands to Europe. They might be quite useful for holidays. But no band could subsist on its earnings from holidays alone. Fiddling and blowing were not such necessities as mending the roof or baking bread, or tailoring or type-setting. They did not even improve one's intellect as reading did. Sacred music was different but no lay orchestra was needed for that. Lay orchestras played nothing but rubbish. Where such ideas reigned Sousa had not much prospect of convincing the Americans that making music was anything better than sheer laziness.

Before he gave a number of national songs to the Americans, the people had had two tunes by which they recognized themselves and each other. One was the popular, restless *Yankee Doodle*, and the other, the solemn, sentimental National Anthem, which begins quite simply with the C major chord. Sousa's marches are intimately connected with these two airs.

"Like the beat of an African drum," Sousa tells us in his book, *Marching Along*, written towards the end of his life, "a march arouses the rhythmic feeling in man," and man, he says, responds with rhythm. A roaring, quick march awakens in everyone the illusion of a battle. "But," says Sousa, "a march must be good." It should be purposeful and striking, not dragged out. Every note should fulfil its purpose, go forward under its own power, and not as if it were dragging a load. He thinks that there is no composition of which the harmonic structure should be more like a skeleton than that of the march; marches must appeal to musical and unmusical alike. Of the composer he demands the art of cutting-down, he should be a genius of omission; his will should be

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weightier than the tune, for only thus can his march be effective in the world.

What does Sousa say of his own marches? He speaks as if he were a ship's engineer. He is always opposed to the superfluous, the super-cargo, the dead-weight. Armed with this cool knowledge he wrote his hundred marches, each more rousing than the last.

All Sousa's marches are marches of the fleet. Their rhythmic progression is borrowed from the sea. Their time is given through an oncoming (mostly gentle) swell; the sea underlying Sousa's marches is not a wild, raging element. That would be useless to the march composer. He looks on the march as a muscular aid to troops on the road. As a cavalry march may not occupy itself in keeping a string of horses under control, so a naval march is not concerned with control of the waves. The Sousa march glides lightly over the waves, which only offer enough resistance to gladden the heart of man. Gusts of wind in short syncopations, the rattle of the ship's ensign, the strong sunshine reflected in the polished brass, the rapid, victorious movement over the plashing mounds of water—that is the area covered by Sousa's music.

Propaganda by lofty artistic methods is the sum total of Sousa's life work. Between America and Sousa, between the general understanding of political necessities and the musical expression of one single potent artist there was not the tiniest rift. Strauss Father and Son were Austria; through them Austria ruled for a century in the life of Europe; life and love were everywhere carried on to their rhythms. And yet there was many a private gap; there were things secret and incommensurable as is the way of European artists. But in America, Sousa and the people were firmly riveted together.

The composer himself was astonished at this; surprised that though in the course of his life he had written ten operas and a

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hundred other things, cantatas, symphonic poems, suites and songs, the Americans had respectfully closed their ears to them. He was wanted as the march composer and the standard-bearer of the nation's will to power.

America and Sousa's music. Alien and strange they appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century before the curtain of the western world. Since the centaurs, no such strange beings had been seen as the great Sousa marches. There they stood and waited, ready to jump across the vast Atlantic and take possession of Europe.

### EDUARD'S DEATH

The Foreign Minister of Strauss music, the propagator, the orchestra conductor had been Eduard alone since Josef's death in 1870. Johann had held himself aloof from it from the time when he began to write operettas. He left to his brother the load of work and the popularity that went with the concerts. For more than thirty years Eduard Strauss might have been seen conducting in all the countries of the earth.

It was his strange fate to be confused with Johann—too often for his taste. The *Chicago Argonaut* in a memorial article wrote about Eduard's conducting, his elegance, his intense musicianship and consistently called him "Johann Strauss."

Eduard's chief merit lay in spreading good orchestral music wherever the Strauss orchestra appeared. It did not confine itself by any means to the playing of Strauss music, but included Wagner, Tschaikowsky, Mozart, Beethoven, Johann Sebastian Bach, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Schumann. Strauss the Elder with his own hand had made arrangements for his orchestra not only of his own waltzes but of the music of Weber, Meyerbeer and Mendelssohn. Josef had made the best transcriptions for the orchestra

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of Beethoven works, but in so far as these arrangements did not figure on the programs, everything had passed through Eduard's brain. The incomparable industry of many decades was incorporated in this work of culture. Johann, overwhelmed by the tempest of his own fertility, had not concerned himself with these things.

Armed with this treasure, Eduard would set out on his tours. All the evils of the earth, a Pandora's chest of accidents, emptied themselves on these journeys, even when they met with great success. In Russia there was cholera, in America a railway accident, a tornado, sunstroke or articular rheumatism. Even an iron constitution was unable to stand up (in 1890) to a tour of the United States which took in seventy-three cities.

The initiator of this tour was David Blakely, former Secretary of State, who had found his way back from an exalted State career to the civilian profession of a manager. Blakely had heard of Johann Strauss' successes in Boston and New York eighteen years before. Strauss at the time had come without his orchestra. And now Blakely conceived the idea of fetching Eduard over with his entire Strauss orchestra. He himself went to Germany where Eduard was conducting a professional tour, and concluded a contract with the youngest of the Strausses. In May, 1890, the journey was undertaken. It was destined to be the journey which spread the name of Strauss most widely in America. But it was the turn of the tide.

Very shortly after 1890, David Blakely took up John Philip Sousa. He scented the coming world fame. Why engage a foreign orchestra if one had a genius in one's own country? Blakely induced Sousa to give concerts in the West, the East, the North and the South. Advertisements worthy of Barnum paved the way by hammering the name of Sousa into every city, and this was fol-



lowed up by a fleet of marches—*The Washington Post . . . The Picador . . . Semper Fidelis . . . High School Cadets . . . The Gladiator.*

Admittedly these produced a hailstorm of feelings. But could one dance to marches like that? A congress of dancing-masters assembled and declared that *The Washington Post* was a dance. Then the first two-step was shown. A gliding step on the flat of the sole; the gentleman no longer opposite but next to the lady. The round dance, bemusing and intoxicating, was shelved. Where a few turns were still made, they were rudimentary. To prevent giddiness, two turns to the right were followed by two turns to the left.

A Professor of Harvard University, invited to dance a waltz, spoke the noteworthy historical words, "Why should I progress so intricate the frontal lobe of their brains. They then will turn in a circle." This saying is more than a joke. It illumines in a lightning flash what it means to expect sober-minded, puritan, realistic Amer-purposelessly? Not even animals move in a cycle, unless you ex-icans to progress in a circle. The waltz was not for Americans; it was romantic and European, suspected of intoxication. Its hundred years' tyranny was thrown off with a smile. To the clear marches of Sousa, America danced the two-step, the one-step, the "Boston." The first steps in a Boston form the run; eight running steps; the partners, stooping, run forwards as if they were approaching a point of attack that must be taken by surprise.

Eduard Strauss in America was surprised that people were *no longer capable of dancing a waltz*. They listened to the Strauss orchestra, but no longer recognized the waltz as a waltz, because they were accustomed to their native rhythms. They tried to dance the Viennese waltz as a polka mazurka, which of course was doomed to failure. The clockwork that had functioned undisturbed for sixty years, since Strauss the Elder visited England in

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1838, had run down. John Philip Sousa had taken the circular rhythm away from the people and implanted in their bodies the two-four march.

Sousa made his first journey to Europe as a tour of inspection. He wanted to reconnoitre the artistic arena that he hoped to conquer. He made the acquaintance of European music and of many people. In London he heard Hans Richter as conductor; that was his greatest experience since he himself at the age of eighteen had fiddled under Offenbach when he came to the States in 1876. He saw Paris, Switzerland, Italy, heard a poor performance of Suppé's *Boccaccio* in Florence, and on the Piazza San Marco in Venice the band, to his amazement, played *The Washington Post*. Sousa asked one of the musicians what that piece was called. A sheet was handed to him on which he read the name of the composer as "Giovanni Filipo Sousa." This was rapidly followed by the explanation that the composer was one of the greatest living Italians!

In Naples Sousa opened the newspaper *Paris Herald*. This was four days old and reported the death of David Blakely, "the well-known musical manager," but also the companion and promoter of Sousa's good fortune. He embarked for home at once.

When the *Teutonic* was leaving the harbor, he was filled with strange, sad thoughts. The protector of his fame was dead. At home troubles awaited him and important decisions. "Bonny Boy," as Blakely called him, was now all alone, with his band waiting for him in America. The contours of Naples receded, Italy was lost on the horizon, the mighty ocean suddenly began to talk to him. As if his dead friend were on the vessel, as if inspired by his memory, Sousa heard, in his mind, a band play an impressive, long-drawn-out march to words that hovered about him:

"Let eagle shriek from lofty peak  
The never-ending watchword of our land;  
Let summer breeze waft through the trees

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The echo of the chorus grand.  
Sing out for liberty and light,  
Sing out for freedom and the night.  
Sing out for Union and its might,  
O patriotic sons."

But the melody! Never before had he been thus inspired:



This was *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. With that he re-entered America.

Then came the war with Spain; America was enflamed with patriotism. The Americans landed in Cuba. An ancient European State lost its colonial heritage. When Admiral Dewey's fleet appeared in sight of the Philippines, the Sousa marches thundered from the decks, mixed with the roar of cannon.

At the time when Sousa was giving a continent new voice, Eduard Strauss seemed to be a broken man. He had suffered a profound private sorrow. His wife and his two sons, whom he had again called Johann and Josef in the Strauss tradition, had speculated with his fortune. The capital he had amassed from years of greatest industry had gone up in smoke. He lost approximately a quarter of a million kronen. The misfortune brought lawsuits in its train. He opposed his family in a court of law. Unpleasant details were made public. The father-and-son quarrel in the Strauss dynasty—sixty years old and long forgotten—flamed up again. The old conductor roused himself and, in escape from these miseries, set off again on his travels. He took his whole orchestra with him and again went to America. With admirable energy he won back some of his lost capital in the winter of 1900. On the return

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journey the orchestra mutinied against the lonely tyrant. He showed them all how he despised them. He knew he would never conduct again, and immediately after his return he disbanded the orchestra founded by his father seventy-eight years before. Bitterly he wrote that he was "highly pleased to be finally rid of that category of human beings."

With the same category of human beings, with fanatical musicians, Sousa now undertook his jump into the Old World. Immense success awaited him. Everybody understood this music, so gay, so redolent of soldiers and of ships. The epoch of sport had set in. Long before the war laid the world at the feet of the Anglo-Saxons, this had been done by sport. Even the dance had to subordinate itself to sport. For the moment it was not dances that Sousa's compositions evoked, but marches. Sousa gave his first European concert in Paris. His welcome was a royal one. Then followed Brussels, Liege, Berlin, where the welcome of the *Morgenpost* took the form of "Sousa, the Strauss of the New World."

After that, came Warsaw, St. Petersburg, Vienna. Sousa had brought no violins. His orchestra, accustomed to play in the fresh air, was a band of powerful wind instruments. These however were "not only the most powerful, but also the most delicate that the world had ever heard." Not only the "thunder of the Rocky Mountains, but the sighing of the West wind and the *pianissimo* hum of metallic dragonflies' wings" were reproduced by them. As the customary tribute to the ruler of a country one is visiting, Sousa asked in Vienna, "Is the *Blue Danube* still popular in Vienna?" When Emil Lindau (brother of Paul Lindau) replied to this, "Mr. Sousa, the *Blue Danube* will endure as long as Vienna exists," Sousa opened his concert by playing the national hymn of Vienna.

And still the last Strauss was alive. Still he remained "der schöne Edi" who, scrupulously neat, always wearing a top hat, walked the streets and squares of the city. He did not share the life of his

contemporaries—his thoughts were turned backwards, dominated by family memories. He was always present when statues were unveiled. When the city of Vienna decided to dedicate a grave of honor to the remains of Strauss the Elder and Lanner, the Cemetery Commission in Döbling opened the excavated grave. They found Johann Strauss still recognizable. On the skull the dark curly hair was combed forwards over the mighty domed forehead. The corpse was clad in the remains of an old-fashioned black Viennese suit, the dress-clothes worn by a conductor. Clearly discernible were the open-work socks, the long, tightly-fitting trousers, and the short shoes with buckles. Only of the legendary violin which was said to have been buried with Strauss was there no trace. Nothing remained of Lanner but the brain-pan and lower jaw-bone. When in solemn procession the remains of the two masters were conveyed to the new grave of honor, Eduard and Therese Strauss, his long-lived children, were present. Also a daughter of Lanner's, Katharina, now nearly eighty.

Eduard lived only in the past. He would send indignant letters to the newspapers and private individuals if they had alleged something incorrect relating to the Strauss family. Even if what they said was correct, he would protest if anything had displeased him. He would not even acknowledge that Father Strauss had at one time done his best to keep his children from a musical career. With the love of the past, which gradually took on the form of a mania, he was simultaneously overcome by a hatred of the present and future which could benefit by that past. He had the feeling that "those who are born later ought not to have too easy a time of it." And so, driven by some obscure impulse, he destroyed the immense collection of music written by his father and the brothers Strauss.

In September, 1907, Eduard made some mysterious inquiries of a manufacturer of stoves. He wanted to know what the latter

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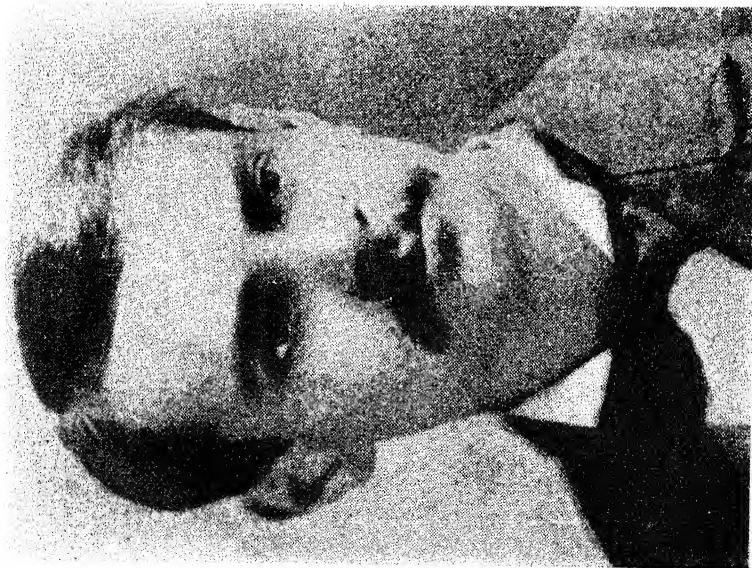
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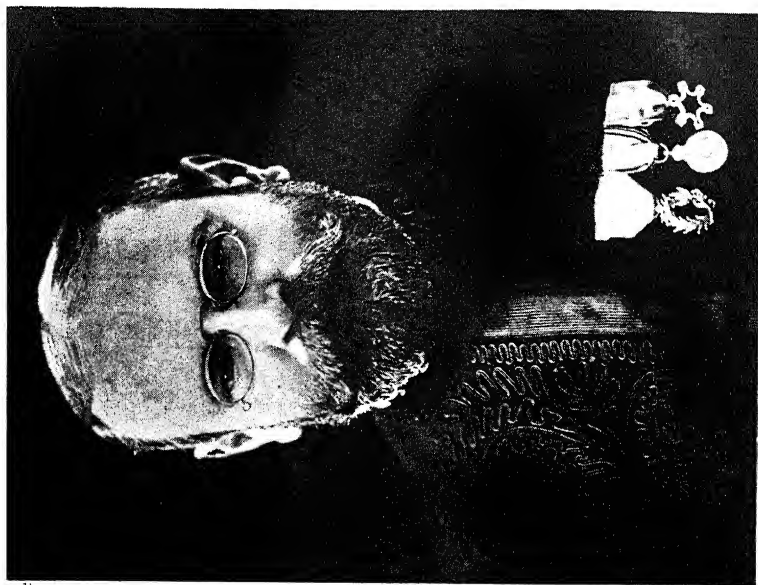
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Notwithstanding the enormous expense incurred to secure the services of this Artist, who has challenged the admiration of the world, the management will adhere to the POPULAR SCALE OF PRICES adopted for the Strauss Concerts, as follows

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would charge to allow him to burn some hundreds of kilos of "waste paper." They agreed on two kronen per hundred kilos. For a time the manufacturer heard nothing more of this apparently innocuous plan. In the end Eduard announced that his waste paper bonfire would take place on October 22nd of the current year. On that day there arrived at the factory a furniture van filled with a great many heavy parcels. Then the manufacturer realized, to his extreme horror, that they consisted of music manuscripts. About two o'clock Eduard made his appearance. The manufacturer tried to persuade him to cancel the whole plan. Strauss stared for a while into space, and then he said in a hollow voice, "I can't." The old man sat down in an armchair in front of the tall grate of the furnace. Behind him stood his ancient servant. Two of the factory workers opened the parcels and threw the music-sheets into the flames. At the sight of some of them on which he recognized his father's or Josef's writing, his chin quivered, but he did not rescue a single one, nor did he leave the factory till the last sheet was consigned to the flames. It is possible to visualize the volume of these archives when we learn that this holocaust lasted a full five hours, from two o'clock till seven.

Eduard grew steadily more unresponsive. As if in a dream he learned of the newest successes of Lehàr and Oscar Straus. He even lived into the epoch of the tango, that passionate-beautiful, passionate-sorrowful dance from South America. The force with which this new dance made contact with Europe in 1913 is indescribable. Only the Great War, which broke out one year after the tango, was stronger. At first the war put an end to all dancing. But after the two-step, the maxixe and the tango, the waltz became little more than a memory.

The Central European Powers, hard-pressed, thought less and less about dancing. Before the end of the gigantic catastrophe that was to shatter two empires, Eduard Strauss died at the age of



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eighty-one. That was in 1916, and one year later, Sousa, sixty-two years of age, re-donned his uniform and together with Franklin D. Roosevelt, then Assistant Secretary of the Navy, organized the music for the men-of-war.

The music introduced to Europe by the Americans was no longer Sousa's alone. It included the songs of his sons and grandsons. It was the jazz music that he detested; the music of the dark tribes, that came into being in 1915 in America; music that the highly talented Irving Berlin gave to millions of fascinated soldiers.

### THE ORIGINS AND TRIUMPHS OF JAZZ

In 1855 there appeared a very curious book, a novel called *Der Amerikamüde* (He Who is Tired of America). The author was an Austrian by the name of Kürnberger, and had never been in America. Nevertheless he repudiated it with fierce hatred.

The hero of Kürnberger's novel, just landed in New York, is accidentally brought into contact with American music. He is seated in a café. A negro orchestra is tuning up. The concert begins. The rhythm is strangely hacked and irregular; moreover any rules that may govern it are treated with disrespect by the musicians. But how does our listener feel when the melody without the slightest transition suddenly jumps from major to minor? Horrified he starts up, snatches the fiddle away from the leader, and plays the phrase correctly. Everybody is amazed at the European, and nobody understands why the visitor interferes with the work of the negroes. The black musicians, though startled, listen with polite smiles to the playing of the white stranger, but when their turn comes again they perpetrate their previous barbarism at exactly the same place as before. Our European music-lover, completely disconcerted, asks the waiter whether in America music is always left to the blacks. He is informed that this is usually the

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case, as white Americans have less talent for music than negroes. The stranger is so taken aback that the expression on his face moves other guests to take part in the discussion. Someone remarks that the man seems to be a German, another attempts to defend the musical honor of the country by saying that the waiter had been referring to public orchestras, but that good chamber music existed in America too. Just as the newcomer is hopefully inquiring where this is to be found, a second band strikes up in the opposite pavilion, playing a different tune with a different rhythm. Each band is able to hear the other perfectly well, but that does not seem to disturb either their well-being or that of the audience. A few children, their American-English proving them to be native-born, come running up eagerly and, intelligently measuring the space with their eyes, stand in the precise center between the two orchestras, in order, as they joyfully call out to each other, to have two musics at once. The European takes to flight.

Had these children possibly an extra sense, one that Kürnberger lacked? In the seventeenth century when French travel-literature was the best in the world, Richard Ligon was the first to describe music as played by the negroes on Barbados. He admired the "*conflit entre le rythme et la mesure*." The blacks must have an extra sense which enables them to evolve a third conception out of the battle between rhythm and tempo. "If they were as capable of distinguishing the notes from each other as of distinguishing the different kinds of beats, they would accomplish wonders in music." Thus, according to this early observer, negroes understood a great deal about rhythm and nothing about melody.

The negroes had brought with them from Africa the custom of singing out of tune and the capacity for singing in varied rhythms. They had a more sensitive feeling for the beats. They could hear in "unaccentuated parts the will to be accented" and lent these

their aid. They were in fact what experimenters in European music demanded: the ideal singers of syncopated music. There was something uncanny in this.

Syncopation, the permanent revolt of the unaccentuated against the accentuated notes, lies in the nature of the English language itself. Recent linguistic biology, initiated by the Germans Wilhelm Wundt, Sievers and Karl Vossler, enables us to trace back changes in the languages of the world for thousands of years. Every language is a community, a nation of words, and every word is an organism which in practice conforms to the prevailing conditions of the world around it.

English is a marine language which has been growing continuously less aristocratic in the course of five hundred years. From a Franco-Germanic chivalrous idiom it has become the speech of the greatest democracy. It has gone down to the sea in ships and conquered the world. This being its purpose in life, English language was biologically bound to accommodate itself to the language of the sea.

Language is a tool, and must be adapted to its purposes. More than any other language in the world, the English language has had to hold its own against the winds of the ocean. It has done so by grinding its own edges off. Its tendency to leave out final syllables, its inclination to monosyllabic words is a heritage of the sea. The language of command, as the shortest and most practical form of speech, is the one that prevails at sea. Not that the English language is incapable of delicate modulations; its maritime character did not prevent it from becoming Shakespeare's medium.

When a language tends towards monosyllabism, accents are shifted, first in individual words, later in sentences. Subordination to a supreme purpose makes for irregularity in details. Among all cultural languages English has the weakest syntax. Its words must, as it were, be able to serve the common cause at any moment and

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be free to execute any maneuver in that cause. From this it is but a small step to the spiritual equality of words and the practical equality of syllables.

The English vocabulary already consists for the most part of monosyllabic words. It is then very striking that poets, who may be looked on as the keepers of the linguistic national conscience, syncopate even words of two and three syllables. A passage selected at random from Byron may illustrate this:

"Eternal spirit of the chainless Mind,  
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty!"

A number of polysyllabic words. But when spoken the accentuation is syncopated. "Eternal," "brightest" and "dungeons" are stressed on the naturally unaccentuated syllables.

Syncopated music is the tonal expression of the maritime tendency of the English language to monosyllabism. It does not represent negro encroachment on alien musical territory. No negro ideology inspired "The Last Rose of Summer." That is wholly English, and it owes its invincible effect to the syncopation of the second bar.

The negroes with their pronounced sense of rhythm must have become susceptible to the syncopating tendencies in the English language at a very early date. They had their own drum music, which was rhythm pure and simple. In America they learnt choral music. English chorals with their division into solo passages sung by the leader, and verses sung by the whole choir resembled in that respect the African priest-songs with which the negroes were familiar; their priests would chant strophes which alternated with antistrophes howled by the whole frenzied community. This similarity paved the way for the profound influence Händel's music was to exercise on the blacks. Their heathen fears and the restful assurance inherent in Protestantism united to produce a new form

of religious song: the Negro spiritual. The culture of this form of song penetrated into the lives of whites and blacks alike, fusing their respective musical predilections into something tangible and enduring. Syncopation, lacking in English hymns, was the basis of the new type. It is the syncopation in the third bar that raises *Swanee River* so far above the level of the ordinary street songs turned out by the million in the nineteenth century. There was no trace of mockery in the syncopated popular songs of black and white America. But derision crept into the dance, and it is not known who started it.

The first grotesque dance of the new century was the cake-walk. It is not certain what the objective of its obvious ridicule really was. Legend inclines to the belief that its distortions were meant to mirror the long extremities, casual gait and lazy attitudes of the negroes. The blacks have the secret of innervating their muscles in a different way from the whites. If this were not the case they could not carry heavy weights so untiringly. This has nothing to do with the muscles themselves, but with their aptitude in distributing the burden. Observation of such peculiarities, tinged with malice, gave birth to the contorted steps and poses of the cake-walk. The blacks took their revenge by inventing other dances to prove that the white man did not know how to dance, "because his limbs are stiff and he will never learn the art of letting them hang free from the joint." The whites, they said, knew how to tense their muscles, but not how to relax them, and nobody could dance well if he were afflicted with such a grave deficiency. This of course stimulated the ambition of the whites. Not to be outdone by the negroes in flexibility, white men founded "de-cramping" schools, in which loose-jointed dancing was demonstrated and taught. Every part of the body was to be rendered independent, the undisputed sovereignty of the feet in dancing had become a thing of the past. There is a certain parallel here to the development in

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music, in which the autocratic rule of the beat had been challenged by syncopation. The new dangling-shambling dances, from the fox-trot to the charleston, did not tire people because the limbs were allowed free play. Bodies were completely relieved of the tension required in European dances, both in the minuet and the waltz. No longer was it necessary to maintain poise; on the contrary, any suggestion of stiffness had become a fault. The possibilities inherent in this type of dance are limited by aesthetic considerations. The charleston dancer is exceedingly happy, but the picture he or she presents is unaesthetic. No society would tolerate it for long. And this fact will in the end kill the negro dances, unless they undergo a decisive change.

## THE END AND THE BEGINNING

"Since the Peace Treaty of Versailles two hundred thousand Americans travel annually from America to Europe." If Paul Morand calculated correctly, there must have been four million Americans in Europe since the war. It is important to realize that these four million tourists must have caused a considerable dislocation of the aesthetic equilibrium in Europe. There has been no parallel invasion of America by European travelers.

Characteristic of the sophisticated American is the supreme nonchalance with which he undertakes the crossing. Just before setting off he shakes hands with friends on Broadway, not in the least as if he were taking leave of them, let alone departing for another continent. Then he drives through crowded streets and with a flower in his button-hole mounts rubber-paved gangways to the deck. In a brilliantly-lighted salon he comes on women in evening wraps, men in dinner jackets talking with animation, drinking cocktails. Something makes a stamping noise under his feet, chains of lights glide mistily past the vast windows of the salon; they diminish in size, our friend is on the ocean. The next day in the

dining-hall he meets friends and acquaintances, sees faces that he may have seen the day before at the theater. Fundamentally the ship is taking America with her on her journey to Europe. Her passengers remain in their own company and make for their own vast playground that stretches from Scotland to Greece. Here they stay a few months, giving orders when they leave for arrangements to be made by the time they come again.

These four million people completely transformed the rhythm of European enjoyment. The jazz and charleston records they brought over with them might have been heard in every tiny mountain village they visited. The new rhythms triumphed everywhere and by the twenties of the present century had crushed out of existence any remnants of European dance-music.

The new tunes were pleasing, and yet a feeling of discomfort pervaded Europe. People sensed the invasion of an inorganic alien rule. There were two reasons for this which everyone realized. One was the mechanical, constructive origin of the melodies. They were not derived like Sousa's marches from inspiration, but from collective industrial efforts. And the other was the orchestration.

Tin-Pan Alley is the place in New York from which jazz music made its start. "Here live the music publishers, here you find the thunder of a hundred pianos, here a thousand voices try out new songs; the musical laborer goes on his way unconcerned, but the stranger takes to flight to save himself from lunacy." These words were written by Paul Bernhard and are contained in his sociologically illuminating book on Jazz.

The industry in Tin-Pan Alley produces music for eight million gramophones, and eighteen million pianos including player-pianos. It provides all theatrical, military and civil music, serves the choral societies and schools and the quarter-million professional jazz players in America, to say nothing of foreign countries. According to *The Saturday Evening Post* 600 million dollars were spent in the

United States in 1924 for printed music and instruments. Eighty percent of this sum—or 480 million dollars—went to Tin-Pan-Alley for jazz. The jazz exports to the rest of the world made up about the same sum again. An industry that deals in such enormous capital has no use for real composers. It would not know what to do with a new Strauss, or a new Sousa. The “composition” of a lullaby proceeds on much the same lines as the production of a Ford car. It is quite easy, because the whole field of European music can be exploited for the purpose.

Almost more important is the clerical staff, from the bookkeeper to the stenographer. The most influential unit is the arranger. Almost all popular music is produced as follows: One of the arrangers—in 1934 there were 30,000 of them—suggests the publication of a new song. After discussions with the sales department a music-smith is set to work in the composition department, the best specialist that can be found for the particular job. Thus there are experts for “Mammy” songs, love-songs, “torch” songs. A technical jury decides whether the song is to be accepted. If acceptance is decided upon, then the first copies are sent to the appropriate authorities for copyright, the next to the head of the Publicity Department. It is his duty to interest the radio and film executives; and charity bazaars, picnics, races, circuses, and public gatherings are besieged by the new song.

The European, even if he does not know all that goes on behind the scenes, feels instinctively the inorganic element in the origin of American jazz music, the emptiness under its palpitating façade. But if there is one thing more than another that spells ultimate death to the rule of jazz in the world, it is the complete hash made of its orchestration.

The inventor of the saxophone was called Sax, and did not live, as most people think, in our own time. His invention dates from 1840. But nobody attempted to bring about a revolution by its



means. Cautiously and slowly the new magnifiers and tone modulators were taken over. European orchestras with their infinite adaptability assimilated the foreign elements and yet retained their individuality. Hungary was worshipped, the *czardas* regarded with affection, but nobody tried to pauperize the orchestra and shower on a waiting Europe the blessings of the cymbal as its principal instrument. This was the folly committed by jazz when it forced the jazz-band on the world. The piano became nothing but an accompanying mechanism to the banjo, the Hawaii guitar, the mouth-organ, the "traps," the "musical saw." Any of these instruments might have been taken over, but never all of them together. Orchestration of that kind, which completely ignored the fact that our old instruments are by no means played out yet, could not and cannot compare with the profundity, scope and dignity of European tone-bodies. Europe is already on the alert to regain its mastery with the help of its old string quartet, its old wood and brass instruments. She will certainly adapt anything she finds practical in American music and American dances to her own purposes, such as the voice of the banjo in music, and muscular flexibility in the dance. But it will all be swallowed up and re-formed in accordance with Europe's own standards.

When will that be? Most certainly not till after some great political turning-point. We have seen in this book that the music made use of by mankind, though it marches slowly and haltingly, quite decisively attaches itself to the political hegemony of the epoch. The royal minuet held sway while France was supreme; the waltz became the undisputed monarch of the ball-room when Napoleon was overthrown with the help of the Germans. One hundred years later the German-Austrian waltz died out when the victorious troops of America streamed across the ocean to the battlefields of Europe.

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